

THE SOUL OF PARIS AND OTHER ESSAYS



VERNER Z. REED

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**THE SOUL OF PARIS
AND
OTHER ESSAYS**





A GREAT CITY STRETCHING AWAY IN ORDERLY PROPORTIONS,
ALMOST TO THE LIMIT OF VISION

See Page 17

THE SOUL OF PARIS

AND

OTHER ESSAYS

BY
VERNER Z. REED

ILLUSTRATED BY
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TO MY DAUGHTER
MARGERY VERNER REED

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

OF the essays contained in this book, the two entitled "The Desert" and "The Soul of Paris" were published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, to whose editors and publishers I am indebted for their courtesy in assigning the book rights. The other papers are here for the first time published.

PREFACE

In the opinions of many the absence in this book of what is called timeliness,—that eternal treating of something of the immediate moment, and, too, usually something expensive, useful, and ugly,—will be deemed a defect. But for this lacking I am not sorry, and I continue to believe that it is good at times to turn from the incessant making of mills and goods and railways and money, from the noise of tramcars and automobiles, from the sensations of politics and politicians, from the bruits of the latest scandal or war or catastrophe, and give a little time to contemplating the stars, or watching the bees, or listening to the songs of the seas.

As I worked upon the book I saw again in the eyes of memory the broad deserts, the sunlit tropic lands, the sometimes wild and sometimes smiling seas, the fair and beautiful islands, the great cities and their lesser but more lovely sisters, the far countries, and the strange peoples, of whom I have written a little in its pages. And as they passed in review before my memory there came other and even better memories of those who had gone with me to those places, and of

those whom I met in the wanderings. Some of those people dwell in palaces, some in huts, some in the skin tents of the nomads. I am glad to remember that I found but little difference,—when the great fundamentals are considered,—between them, and that I found nearly all of them to know and practice much of the old-fashioned virtues of humanity.

Whether my work in this book is good or not,—so long as I did my best to make it good,—does not so much matter; for the doing of it,—the labor,—has been the chiefest thing. And like all labor that is willingly and seriously performed, the doing of it has been good for him who did it; for “Labor is Prayer!”

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"But know this: life is terrible, yet it is good to have lived; all things are mysteries, but out of these mysteries will come knowledge and truth; many things are fearful, but there is nothing to fear. You and I and the people we know and the deeds we do and the mysteries that come before us are all mere parts in an infinite purpose,—a purpose that will unfold itself as time and eternity go on, and as it unfolds will fill us with wonder, with awe, with love and devotion. For all things are good. They seem bad only because we do not know their purpose. Fear not! In this world and in all worlds, all is well."

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I

THE SOUL OF PARIS

“For a dream cometh through the multitude of business.”

I

THE SOUL OF PARIS

IN LOOKING DOWN upon any great city one is impressed with the truth of Belloc's belief that cities have souls. He comes to realize that each city has an individuality peculiar to itself,—an identity, a spirit, and an attitude of mind belonging to itself alone. This is not only true of cities, it is true of nations; and if we look deeply into the characteristics of any of the nations we know, or of those whose tales are preserved in true histories, we find the soul that dominated the nation. Cities, too, are like men and nations in other ways; they have their periods of ascension, of maturity, and of decay; their seedtimes and their harvests; their youth and their old age.

Of the ancient cities,—for it has an age of almost twenty centuries,—Paris seems to be the phœnix, the one city that has the power of rising young and virile from its own dead ashes. It is not sunken in sleep, as Florence; it is not dying, as Venice; it has not fallen into playing with masks in which itself does not believe, as Rome; it is not suffering from arrested spiritual and

mental development, as London; it has not resigned itself to the stupor of sensuality, as Tunis; but it has kept pace with the march of the centuries, it has itself often led the march, and it stands to-day, despite its hoary age and its ancient traditions, as the most modern city in the modern world, as the newest city in the new century. And its thought is new and modern, and its philosophy—drawn from the old—becomes new again in modern applications. It scans well the pages of history, so that, knowing the pitfalls that have been, it can avoid those to be. It scans well the future, and moves forward with great caution,—but it always moves.

Nevertheless, it is not the past nor the future that Paris loves best. It knows that the past has gone, and that the future is not yet; and, without grieving for the one or fearing the advent of the other, it enjoys to the full the priceless Now. It enjoys it tranquilly, sanely, and soberly, and in many ways. To develop in all ways is to be able to enjoy all things; so love, money, art, science, philosophy, literature, nature, beauty, and work are all revered by this wise city, which believes that each in its proper place is good.

Paris itself as a whole, as an entity, has an indescribable fascination for its own people, and for travelers as well. Whole libraries have been written

of it, but the story of Paris has never been told, and will never be told, because no one knows or has known its story. Whatever one seeks in the world, Paris contains. Whatever men have done in the world, the effect, or expression, is in Paris. And so in attempting to view this wonder among cities it will be found to reward being studied in its inner nature, as well as from the bird's-eye view of the lover of panoramas,—and that, too, will repay the effort it costs.

If one stands upon any of the heights about Paris and gazes down upon it, he sees one of the most fascinating pictures that are spread upon the face of the earth,—a great city stretching away in orderly proportions almost to the limit of vision, marked here and there by the great architectural monuments the ages have bequeathed to it, and lying busy and alert under the light mists that its multitudinous lives cause ever to hang over it, humming with its noises of toiling or playing millions,—as instinct with life as though it itself were human, as beautiful itself as any of the countless treasures of art it contains. The view of Paris is unique among the views in the world, as it itself is unique among the cities of the world. Why need we pore over the archæologists' tales of the dead cities of Asia Minor, of Egypt, or of Mauretania? Great Babylon or storied Thebes was never so great

as Paris is. Herculaneum would not have made an arrondissement in Paris, and Pompeii and Timgad united would not have made it a suburb. It is worth while to study Paris both from within and from without, in its body and in its soul. We may find that all the giants did not live in the older days, and that the ancients did not know all the wonders of the world.

Victor Hugo liked to gaze upon Paris from the towers of old Notre Dame, and to send his imagination back to the time when it was a Gothic city, inclosed within walls, and forming what he believed to be "a homogeneous city,—an architectural and historical production of the Middle Ages,—a chronicle in stone." He grieved for Gothic Paris and offered us picturesque but squalid Vitré as a consolation. But we require no consolation, for the world and humanity outgrew the Middle Ages, and why should Paris have been expected to lag behind? Belloc loves Paris best as seen from the historic Hill of Valerian; and it seems to have been the Parises of St. Genevieve and of St. Louis that he deemed the best; but the destroying ages that demolished the Paris of the saints have builded a better Paris, and one more deserving of love.

Paris is well seen from the Eiffel Tower—not the least of the advantages being that then one does not need to see the unlovely tower itself. From St. Cloud

one sees the city over its great wood,—its magnificent garden built for pleasure-seekers and which seems to border a pleasure city. But from St. Germain-en-Laye the farther view is more in keeping with the real soul of the great city,—the soul that began to unfold two thousand years ago, and is still unfolding. One sees the city across the green valley of the winding Seine as he sees its history across the dim outlines of twenty vanished centuries. The view is bounded by heights on either side; it extends, crossing and recrossing the tortuous river, on over tree-embowered villages, past old Valerian,—and there, shimmering on the horizon like a mirage, crowned with its dome-crested hill of Montmartre, shines Paris,—a great white city, a great white vision floating in the translucent atmosphere. From this point one does not see all of the city; indeed only a small part of it is within view; but one sees enough. The picture that lies before one is softened by the distance until it seems perfect; and the same distance hides all the city's crudenesses and imperfections as the centuries that have gone hide the cruelties of its history. The harsher shades are all toned down, and one seems to be looking upon a city that is perfect, that is finished. And that great indistinct picture is Paris,—Paris the ancient, Paris the new, Paris the superstitious, Paris the free-minded, Paris the player, Paris the toiler, Paris the philosopher, Paris the mad,

Paris the saint, Paris the beast! For Paris has been—and is—all of these things, and more.

As one approaches this “great human sea” he comes upon busy suburbs, dominated by tall chimneys, belching forth forever the smoke that is emitted by busy factories, and which emblemize the busy iron age that Paris, with the rest of the world, has entered upon. And beyond the factories, rising like a beacon, the new and unlovely basilica lifts its high head, as though to proclaim that the superstitious part of the spirit of the Middle Ages also lives and remains a part of the great city’s life. And, as the approach becomes nearer, one may look upon the Louvre, treasury of the best and most beautiful work that the hands of men have wrought since the beginning of history; he may see the outlines of the great colleges from which, since the time of ill-starred Abélard, the essence of human thought has gone forth to leaven the minds of men. And as one passes through the city he may gaze upon crumbling old Notre Dame, mother of Gothic churches, and one of the most imposing and beautiful structures that men have reared since the chisels fell from the hands of the old Greek builders. One may go on, and look upon the beautiful and the unsightly churches as well; upon the Tower of St. Jacques, whose beauty has outlasted generations and dynasties; upon the great galleries and museums; upon the few

remains of the old civilizations and old architectures, at the great schools and laboratories, the stately homes of the government, the splendid system of boulevards and avenues and parks that have served to bring the country into the city and to make of Paris the airiest and roomiest city in the world, then at the statues and sculptures which are the stone poems bequeathed to the city by the passing ages, at the monuments which have been raised to do honor to the city's great sons,—and yet one has not seen Paris. He has seen but its framework, the outlines of its great monuments of history and of accomplishment, the shells of its great institutions,—but a part of the body that holds its great soul. For Paris, above all cities, has a soul. It, above all cities, is an entity, an individual. It is a city, but it is more than a city: it is a true microcosm. It is essentially French, but it is more than French. It is the great World City, more cosmopolitan than ever was Rome, great in more diversified ways than any city has ever been, and more beautiful than any other city that men have yet reared upon the earth,—for the Lost City of Is, its only rival in beauty, is but a myth. It is Paris the unique, Paris the intellectual capital of the Western world and of the white race of mankind, Paris the greatest city in existence.

But that last statement will be challenged, for the pride of more than one great metropolis is concerned.

Let us examine slightly a few other cities. London is very great, ponderous in its mighty bulk, mighty with its millions of humans and of gold pieces, the capital and metropolis of the English people. But, after all, it is but an English city; it is English in its every feature, and English in its soul. It is bound by the same inflexible laws of caste that are choking the people whose capital it is; it is fettered by the same iron traditions that at first upbuilt and are now smothering its nation; and above all it is forbidding, and gloomy, and unlovely, and its treasures of architecture and its lovely places are not enough in number to offset the sombreness of its dreary miles upon miles of dreary red brick houses inhabited by dreary people who live out their dreary lives under its leaden and dreary skies. Yet under its grim exterior it hides a genial nature, and to those who know the way to its heart it is a city to love. But all the time, if one will enjoy London, he must close his eyes to the human misery that hedges him about in almost every quarter, to the human wrecks that litter its streets, and to the great gloomy districts—populous cities in themselves—where only poverty and vice and ignorance and misery have their abodes.

New York is a great city, a very great city indeed, standing as it does as the flower of a new civilization, the work of a new race. It has an undaunted soul,

strong arms, great riches in its coffers, and high aspirations for its future. But the new race that builded it had, in times that are yet recent, to hew down the forests, and blaze new trails in trackless lands, and conquer wildernesses, and reclaim deserts, and establish new institutions, and light new beacon fires to guide the steps of men. New York and the nation of which it is the metropolis have been too busy, and are too young, to have equalled ancient Paris in the race for superiority. And it was not long ago that it could also have been said that America was too poor to enter the competition. It is now a nation grown rich, a nation rejoicing in its newly achieved wealth and power. But the memory of its days of poverty still abides with it, and the utilitarianism born of that poverty—of those old prime needs for houses to live in and food to eat—is still visible in its body and in its soul. As the metropolis of a great new nation, a nation so great that it does not know its own strength, so rich that the tale of its wealth is like an Eastern fairy tale,—New York may in time also become a great World City. If it does there will be two, for eternal Paris will continue. But even now New York, in being the greatest city of the Americans, has achieved enough glory for a city whose site was the camping-ground of savages when Paris was hoary with age.

Berlin is a great German city, but it is nothing

more. It is the tongue and the hand of Germany,—hardly its brain and heart,—but its influence is not great beyond the German Empire. It is in all things German, and a little provincial in being only North German,—staid, rather stolid, not so beautiful as it is substantial, not so cultured as it is rich, still bound by tradition, dreaming of war, and knowing more of science than of art, more of utility than of beauty. It is ambitious, very well content with itself, and progressive after its own fashion. Vienna is typically Austrian, which is to say South German. It does not even typify the various races whose capital it is. It is the fit seat of a feudal empire that has endured after the close of the epoch to which it belonged. It is held in lines of caste, which are gilded by gentility and culture, but which are none the less potent to limit its progress and stifle its advancement. It enjoys itself in pleasing manners of gayety that have come down from an older age; it is finished, accomplished, refined,—and it is decaying and giving way in the world, according to the inevitable law, to more progressive rivals. It has not the adaptability nor the philosophy of Paris; it continues more Catholic than Rome, more conservative than Brittany, more feudal than remotest Silesia. It does not change as the world and the times change, and its chief interest is that it remains as a living embodiment of a civilization that in other lands has

died. It is a greater sister to Toledo and Venice, but it is in no sense a great World City. And so, after viewing the cities, it might be said that he who does not dwell in Paris is a village dweller.

It is Paris alone of the ancient cities that has kept step with the march of the ages. It retains some of the walls and towers of the ancient architectures that existed coeval with its ancient systems, yet it has gone from their epochs as it has gone from the systems they contained. And the monuments that stand from the older ages serve as reminders to the great city of the glories it has achieved, of the evils it has endured and conquered, of the sins it has done, and of the penances it has done for its sins. For Paris has sinned mightily, and it has done mighty penance. It might be likened to a great man, marvelous in ability, incredible in strength both of sinew and spirit, yet who is erratic and sometimes uncontrolled, who inherits from the past not only the polish of all education and refinement, but also old strains of barbarity that sometimes rise above his erudition and philosophy and cause him to return to the savagery in which his race was born. Paris has risen like a demon; it has revelled in blood like a fiend; it has gyrated in madness like a maniac. And yet even in its madnesses and its excesses it has been ever dominated by the great soul that sits enthroned within it, and that has always been potent

to extract good from the evils it has done. It has risen in blind rage, but when it has done so an evil throne has been overturned or an iniquitous system has been removed from among the shackles that bind humanity. Upon the ashes of its evils it has always builded new structures of good. Except the invention of printing and the discovery of America, the French Revolution has been the most potent event for human advancement of which history tells; and its madnesses and its mighty beneficent after-results are typical of the fierceness and the wisdom of Paris.

Certain esoteric schools believe that the destiny and progress of the world are guided by certain good and wise beings called Mahatmas, who, from silent places of peace, send forth the thoughts and inspirations that cause humanity's progress. If one might draw a comparison from this belief, he might say that below the great Soul of Paris there exists and functions a band of lesser spirits who guide and direct the individual things that the great city stands for,—as progress, freedom, science, art, and literature. And in order to come closer to the soul that guides all, it may be well to observe what these lesser divinities of the city are accomplishing. The Spirit of Architecture in Paris, in times past, wrote as beautiful messages in stone as have been given to humanity since the decadence of Greece. It builded in the forms of Rome as

well as did Rome itself. It inspired the Crusaders to carry the pointed arch of the Arabs home from the wars, and from that arch it created Gothic architecture, in which could be expressed all the passions of the human soul. It joined with Italy and perfected the Renaissance. And then it slept. And it sleeps to-day, and in its seat sits a false Spirit of Architecture, that is cold, and hollow, and untrue, and arrogant, and pitiful, and wholly unlovely. The Eiffel Tower is one of its fruits,—a thing of strength and might, but with no softness in its soul, no grace in its spirit, and no beauty on its face. The Grand Palace is another of its fruits,—and is a fit emblem of brazen self-assertion, of mock gentility, and of the flaunting of vulgar riches in the abashed face of Taste. It is worse than the Trocadero only in that it lays claim to being better. The new Hôtel de Ville of Tours emanated from the false spirit that has usurped this throne in Paris,—and it, like the cold and soulless basilica of Montmartre, is so hideous as to be sinful. Archæologists have grieved because they could find no traces of the private homes of Egypt. If they were as unlovely as the new villas that are springing up, like excrescences, in the suburbs of Paris, fate was kind to hide all trace and memory of them. All this makes one incline to Hugo's belief that books have killed architecture, as they are cheaper and easier mediums through which souls can express their pas-

sions. But in times past the Spirit of Architecture in Paris has slumbered through generations only to awaken refreshed and go forward to the accomplishment of truer and more beautiful things; and in time it may cast off the false forms that are created in its name and again build in truth and beauty. For a really rich mankind needs both books and architecture.

To make again the esoteric comparison, one might say that the Spirit of Painting is drunk. It is sending forth myriads of ill-formed things that can be the product only of jaundiced eyes and hands unsteady from debauchery. And like any drunken thing, it takes itself most seriously. It produces weak things in discordant colors, paltry things without beauty of soul, trivial things without meaning or value, and then it blames the age because its work is not hailed as the emanation and product of genius. Painting in Paris has become puerile, and almost imbecile. But this now drunken Spirit of Painting was very sober and very sane through generations, and even in not olden times it inspired the eyes and hands of Greuze, and then of Millet and Diaz and Rousseau and Corot. It nodded and dozed before Puvis de Chavannes had learned all the message it tried to speak to him in sobriety; it was able to deliver its message almost intact to Lhermitte,—and then it maundered off into the drunken

jargon that has been accepted as the code and the creed of almost all of those who came after.

And so with all who sit on the thrones of the artistic section of this brotherhood; all slumber, or are mad, or have sunk into dotage, or are drunken. A very little good sculpture is done,—more literary, if such an expression may be used, than artistic; and wholly impotent to stand against the armies of mediocre things that rise up, like dragon's teeth, to contend the ground with it. The lustres and harmonies that once dwelt there have escaped from the tapestries that are now woven; the geometrical lines of the great iron tower have also invaded the potter's wheel; Boule is almost a forgotten name, and is wholly a forgotten influence; and since Hugo and Renan—and with the exception of Maeterlinck—the Spirit of Letters has for the most of the time sulked in its tent. But such vagaries and lapses have occurred before, yet have always been followed by periods of renewed excellence. And there are earnest things still at work in Paris,—earnest and potent members of its Inner Brotherhood who are still striving and bringing forth. The Spirit of Science sleeps not nor rests. It works with patience, and it produces progress and aids evolution. All the sciences are progressive in Paris, from the humanitarian science of the physicians to the sciences that penetrate the heavens and the molecules.

Philosophy—also awake and alert—guides the hand of Science, and gives it counsels, so it offers to the world only what it can demonstrate and prove. And the spirits of the more homely and more necessary arts of Government, Commerce, Finance, and Industry,—and it must still be added, War,—are alert, keen, progressive, and successful.

And over all of these things there reigns that mystic, intangible Soul of Paris, that soul that permeates the great city and its people and its nation, that soul which has expressed itself in the people's history, literature, art, science, and progress. And if we are able to approach closely to this soul, and to discern what is the inmost thing that dominates it and for which it stands, I believe we shall find that thing to be defined in the words Human Advancement,—the betterment of the condition of mankind. It was Paris that first killed the dragon of feudalism; it was Paris that overturned the despotic and cruel throne that had reared itself upon the quivering hearts of the masses; it was Paris that first dared to claim for humanity the rights of free thought and free speech,—and Paris was the teacher of Paine and Franklin and Jefferson. It believes in thought being free, and in France—the first of the Western nations—it will not be long until men may really and actually search for, and live in accordance with, beliefs that will truthfully harmonize with the dic-

tates of their own consciences,—and not meet with ostracism therefor.

It is from this mythical and yet existent Soul of Paris that much of the progress known in the Western world has emanated. And as we study the mandates it has given forth, and as we analyze the effects that have followed its teachings, we find them to be good, and to stand always for the betterment of the condition of the human race, for the advancement and enlightenment of human society, for the progress of human institutions toward good, and, above all, for the evolution of the individual. And if there may be said to be a text to the inner and most sacred creed of this Soul of Paris, if there may be said to be one right which above all others it esteems as being founded upon an eternal verity, and which it considers to be its chiefest mission to promulgate and enforce, I think that it would not read, "Be content with the station and the class in which fate has placed you," nor "All men are born free and equal," but that it would be the definition of the goal of all true progress and the aim of all true civilization, and that it would read:

"Equality of opportunity shall be free to all."

And in this, its inmost word, not yet fully enunciated, it is speaking anew the thought differently spoken but with the same meaning by Plato, by Napoleon, by

the founders of the American Republic,—and by philosophy and science.

Will you analyze this promise that the future is uttering through the Soul of Paris? I do not think that its realization would have the definition of anarchy, or of any form of socialism now advocated, but that it is the definition and description of the chiefest birthright of all men. If it is ever realized it will harmonize with the law of the Survival of the Fittest,—and it will not burden the capable with the weak.

And so one turns from his contemplation of the dominating Soul of this great World City with a renewed conviction that humanity is advancing, with a renewed confidence in the saneness of the purpose of things,—with a renewed belief that God's world was made for the world's people and for all of its people.

II
THE DESERT

"The little affairs of life blossom swarthy in the cities. Warriors come down from the mountains. Where the rivers flow vehemently active men are bred. But valley-men do not rise to heights of introspection, nor do men who dwell by the chattering waters attain serenity of thought; only in the quiet, monotonous deserts—where the level lines run league after league—does the mind find its great equilibrium. Mathematics and art were born in the desert; religion is man's translation of the desert."

II

THE DESERT

OPINIONS are frequently so hastily formed, and conclusions are so often erroneous, that they need not be taken too seriously into account. One may believe that the earth is borne upon the back of a turtle, or that God will punish his creatures for performing the acts that he caused them to perform; yet these beliefs will not alter the real truth of the matter. Truth is not lying at the bottom of a well, but is all about the world, on the sea, in counting houses, in workshops, and in temples. That it is often not recognized makes no difference with the fact that its presence is universal. Yet even truth may seem to be a variable thing, in accordance with conditions. To a monk, withdrawal from the world and the practice in the sternest way of abstinence and continence may represent the requirements of truth, but that seeming of truth to him does not make it truth to others. So it is with people, and landscapes, and places. The fact that a given man can see no beauty away from Piccadilly or the Bois de Boulogne does not disprove the beauty of the Lake of

Bourget or the Valley of Apam. Because deserts, to most people, are places of desolation that they like to shut out of their sight if they can, and out of their memories when they have once passed over them and are safely in the green valleys or the fertile flat lands, it is none the less true that they are among the most interesting places upon the face of the earth. Deserts are equal to the sea in the ideas they give of extent, solitude, and infinity, and equal to the mountains in beauty and weirdness. One of their chiefest beauties is that they are far from the throngs and crowds of tired, nervous, disappointed, and envious men and women, who occupy much of the nearer landscape in inhabited places.

In the uninhabited desert there are no men bending under weights of underpaid labor, no women eating out their hearts because of unsatisfied cravings and ambitions; there are no richer and no poorer ones there; no vexing questions of schism and sect, of ruled and rulers, of capital and labor, of natural desires and artificial morals. But there is a brooding peace, as deep as the fountains of life in the bosom of old mother earth; there is silent communion with the powers and laws of nature, with the Power or Force or God that somewhere back of its visible and invisible mysteries looks so carefully after the things that exist that even the sparrows are accounted for; and there is a content that

is beyond money and power and position and the accidents of birth, station, and environment. Like old Omar's

"Strip of herbage strown,"

the deserts surely are the places

"Where name of slave and sultan is forgot,"—

and well forgot. They are the places where Truth wears no disguises, and whose face may be studied even by a fool.

The deserts, too, have physical beauty. This varies with each one as much as do the individual beauties and peculiar attractions of different ranges of mountains. With some there are the shifting seas of gray sands, ever moving, ever rearing themselves into hills and dunes that are blown down again by the next wind—blown down and dispersed and scattered as men have ever been dispersed and scattered, no matter how strongly they allied themselves into tribes and communities and nations. Nor are the dunes much sooner forgotten than are the men and the races, if the measurement is computed by geological time. In such hot, gray deserts there is a strange weirdness, almost beauty, in the metallic sky, in the occasional sagebush or cactus, in the great ball of molten fire that is the sun. But the chiefest charm in such deserts, as with all, is in the fact

that here one can be alone, with himself and with nature, and away from all the mistakes and cares that burden life in the inhabited places. When the Jugger-naut car of Civilization presses unduly and unusually hard, when things are most out of joint, when the disease of progress is at such an acute and critical stage that a powerful counterirritant is needed, then the beauties of the hottest and most barren desert are unfolded, and are appreciated as is strong drink after exposure to severe cold. But for lasting beauty and permanent enjoyment, the deserts where some vegetation grows, where a dry stream-bed winds its way across the landscape, where prairie dogs and locusts abound and ant-hills mark the course of vision, are the most desired. In some such deserts there are a few winding, irresolute little rivers that seem to have been frightened by tales of the uproar and fury of the sea, and to have turned inland to places where they can drop out of sight and bury themselves in the sands in peace. I know such a desert, where cottonwood trees grow along the courses of the odd little rivers, inviting the dusty traveler to lie under their welcome shade and prove the wisdom of the nations that number the siesta among their national institutions. And if there is a gray, hazy mist in the sky or in part of it, and given that the sun is willing, there are spread before one the marvelous mirages of the Southland. In such a place

I once saw a mirage of an island in a quiet sea. The beach descended in an easy slope to the water line, irregular rows of palm trees grew along the shore, and an infinite silence and peace hovered like a benison over the place. I do not know where the reality of the image is located, but some place on the face of this one of God's worlds that island of beauty exists, perhaps in undiscovered pristinity, and is another of the visible manifestations of the absolute beauty, and consequently of the absolute good, of nature. A few of us saw this transferred picture when we were in a barren desert of the great Bolson of Mapimi, and its only settings were the sky, the sun, and the broad, silent stretches of sand. I think no one of that little party had ever seen anything more beautiful among all the lands and cities he knew; and I think no one of them will ever be told so much of the real grace and goodness of nature or of God as was there disclosed as a picture in the silence of the desert.

The deserts have voices, and we can hear and understand them if the ears of our souls are open and attuned to the languages they speak. They do not speak loudly, and with insistence, but very gently, and with great modesty; and they speak with the sublime indifference that is one of the chief appurtenances of all truth. We may listen or close our ears, we may understand or not, we may heed or go unheeding, it is all

THE DESERT

matter of the most complete indifference to the desert. It is with the voice of nature that the desert speaks, with the truth of nature, with the persistence of nature; but if we heed not its voice, or are indifferent to its message, the great soul of the desert stops not to argue nor to grieve, for it knows that to-morrow we shall be dead and at one with nature anyhow. Whether we hear or are deaf, God's will will be done; nations will rise and fall, mountains will emerge from the sea, and the sea will submerge mountains; fables of Jehenum and the devil will be hurled broadcast to frighten men during their few days, and men will in time return to the dust from which they are made, and the future will remain in the hands of God, who perhaps has not told even to the spirits of the desert the secret of the purpose of things. The inevitable and infallible evolution of things will go on, the processes of the suns will work out the destinies that were set to them, and why should the soul of the desert trouble itself because weak mortals cannot understand its language, and that they prefer to keep their eyes to the ground and suffer deafness of their own choosing, rather than strive to see the beauties of which it speaks, and understand the messages it is willing to say into their unwilling ears?

I know a desert that is full of voices, that is full of messages, written in stone, that men can but dimly understand, that is full of sermons of a rarer and better

kind than men have ever spoken. This desert is on a high plateau, a thousand feet above the desertlike valley of a lonely river that winds its way along nature's course to the sea, unmindful of what bands of temporary peoples may from time to time inhabit and encumber its banks. This desert was once inhabited, and through its crumbling ruins it tells of nations that were born into the world, perhaps before the word history had a definition, and who faded from life perhaps before the Druids began sacrificing blood in the groves of Britain, and who were followed by other nations in a younger time that is now so old as to be almost beyond comprehension. These old cliff ruins, slowly wearing away by the gentle action of the soft winds that blow down from the mountains, speak eloquently of the inevitable destiny of men and the races of men. We may find, if we seek the knowledge, that distant descendants of the ancient nations who once dwelt and toiled and loved and worshiped and died in what is now this gray desert, live petty lives in mud villages in remote places; but the time has been so long, and food has had to be sought so persistently, that they know of the old tribes of their ancestors only by dim traditions and the scraps of history handed down and woven into the fantastic superstitions of their priests. The soul of this desert, speaking from among the crumbling ruins that dot it as ant hills dot a sandy valley, seems to

say, "In the end all the works of men lead but to oblivion and decay. Individuals, communities, tribes, and nations may fret the face of the earth for a little time with their presence, with their toilings, and their wranglings over things that they know not of, but in the end it will be in all places as it is here. The peoples will be gone, and those who come after them will know not where. Memories of them will not abide with their successors, and they will be forgotten utterly in all places in the world. But the effects of what they have done will not be lost, for nothing is lost in nature."

The realizing sense that we get in this desert of our own smallness and futility is better than much of the education that is dinned into the ears of students by dogmatic pedants. And, when we come to think upon the truths that the desert teaches, we find them pleasant. We are yet at the beginning of things, although we may be the descendants and ascendants of every form of vegetable and animal life that has ever been upon the earth or in its waters. For us, with our little brains that are so easily turned, it is perhaps better that we are incapable of understanding the skies and the stars, the beginning and the end of things, and the great facts about God and his myriads of worlds. Else might the knowledge craze us; and as it would be impossible for our wisdom to keep pace, even if

we could comprehend the knowledge, our happiness is better conserved, and our progress better assured, that things are as they are.

In the desert the condition of the surroundings makes it plain to us, as the forests made the same truths plain to Thoreau, that we are insignificant and ignorant; that we do not know the letter "A" and cannot count one. But a great fact, temporarily at least, is made known to our intuitive senses, a fact that all the science and theology of all the races of men have not yet been able to conclusively and absolutely prove, namely, that with us, and as part of us, are souls, mysterious parts of the fabrics of our being that we do not comprehend, and that are immortal if it is wisest and best for them to be so. The desert takes away from her true lovers the fear of death and the mysteries of the unknown and unknowable future. She teaches that it is wisest and best that she herself exists, that the mountains exist, that humanity exists, that the universe exists, that water seeks always its level, that the clouds pass over the face of the earth, that all that is is right, and that it must also be true that it is best for all life that exists in flesh to have an end. The silent voices of the desert say that in all nature there are no mistakes; that, therefore, it is impossible for mankind to be a mistake, and that if immortality is best, then it will surely be.

There are poisonous things in the deserts, plants whose juices are death-dealing, and creatures that are venomous, but they have their places and their uses in the great system of things; and this is none the less true because we, who do not know even our own uses and purposes, fail to know theirs. It must also be inevitably true that their uses and purposes are for ultimate and absolute good, as are all things else in the world.

I know a desertlike place that is not wholly a desert, yet it is neither oasis nor fertile land. It is what might be termed a semi-desert, and it has a mood that is different from that of other deserts. It seems a philosophic, well-contented sort of place, that has much knowledge, much wisdom, and that extracts a wise enjoyment from the days that pass over it. It is nearly related to a tall peak, and is akin to a near-by range of mountains, and to the air and the sky. Flowers grow upon this semi-desert,—sunflowers, and bergamot, and bluebells, and Mariposa lilies, and many other shaggy little stems that bear blue and yellow and white and seven-hued blossoms. It knows sagebrush, too, and yucca, and various pygmy cacti. It is field and farm and native land for many well-established, ancient, and wise nations of prairie dogs, and it is the world and the fullness thereof for thousands of republics of ants. This semi-desert stretches away from the mountains and runs undulating in billows toward the east. We know it

reaches to farms and towns and work and trouble, and that its next of kin, the prairie, goes on to the great rivers whose banks are lined with the coveters of chattels, but we like to think that, as a desert, it stretches away beyond the horizon, and passes unchanged on to infinity, and that across it is the road to eternity, and endless growth of soul, and ceaseless joy of effort and consummation.

A little town has been built upon the edge of this desert. The town is the best one I know, and is infinitely superior to London or Paris or New York, in that it is infinitely smaller, and therefore cannot hold so much poverty and vice and false pride and malice and envy; but yet it seems a sort of desecration for it to sit in all its upstart garishness upon the edge of this ancient and perfect semi-desert. It seems an impertinence, something as a beetle would if it sat upon a masterpiece of the painter's art. The desert crowds upon the town somewhat, by way of discipline, and it sometimes seems mildly to threaten that it will press forward and sweep the houses and gardens before it. But I think it is not much annoyed by the town, or that it gives much thought to it, for other towns, in other and forgotten times, may have settled upon its borders, and they are gone, and the desert knows by that past experience, as well as by its natural wisdom, that this town, too, will go in time, and that it will be left again to undisturbed

communion with the stars that are its angels, and the mountains that are its sisters, and with the sun that is lover of both it and the mountains. And then, too, if the town has the same good right to exist that the desert has, the desert knows that much better than does the town. The mountains that look down upon this semi-desert wrap themselves in mantles of filmy mist at night, and they and the desert sleep the peaceful sleep of nature, secure in the absolute knowledge that the sun will come again as soon as it is best for him to come. Then in the morning the mists unwrap themselves in winding veils of beauty and melt away; the sun kisses the desert and thrills the mountains to their hearts with messages of infinity and eternity. And perhaps the desert and the mountains say to one another that the little town is not a desecration, but is also good, and that even its poorest and meanest inhabitant is as great and as valuable in the estimation of God as is the sun himself.

The most beautiful, the most mysterious, the most inscrutable of all the deserts I know is one that lies to the north of the city of Zacatecas. It is much loved by the sun, but it loves the shadow better. The sun gathers pictures over the world for it and casts them as mirages upon it for it to see, much as any other foolish lover casts pieces of stone and bits of metal at the feet of his sweetheart. But this desert loves the sun better

because of his disappearance; and when he sinks behind the Sierra Madres, which are the true lovers and beloved of this desert, she puts on her loveliest appearance, and takes unto herself a beauty that is beyond description. The hills outvie her in effort and in beauty, and if in all the world there is a more lovely or more beautiful place than is this at sunset, then have travelers missed the purpose of their wanderings, for they have not told of such a place. The sun casts golden messages back as he sinks over the side of the world,—shafts of light that strike the sides of the everlasting hills and refract from them in prisms of greater beauty than ever artist fastened to canvas. The mountains translate these golden messages into shadows, and send them stealing over the bosom of the desert. The everlasting hills change their color from the dull brown of day into an ultramarine, and the golden aureole on their summits makes them seem to be truly clothed in royal purple and golden crowns, but better than human imitations, for theirs are purple of royal nature and crowns of nature's beauty. The subtropical atmosphere that has been surcharged with heat throughout the day quivers in vibrations that seem to extend to the ends of space, and the mountains appear to quiver, and even to move forward in perfect motion and in dancing light, in sympathy with the kind and perfect farewell of the sun. These everlasting mountains seem to call out

a message to the desert, and to the humans and beetles and ants, too, if they can understand, and say,—

“We are the everlasting hills. We are the beloved of the sun, who thrills us to our hearts each day, and tells us of the infinity and immutability and all-wisdom of our Creator. We stand as emblems of eternity and steadfastness and truth and right-being. We are motionless, but we are content, for we know that in God’s good time we will be changed. But we are immortal, and indestructible, and created of God, and nothing can be other than well with us. And the sun loves us, and love is the warmth and the light of existence, and we are content, and more than content.”

And as the golden crowns fade from the summits of the mystic mountains, and the shadows stretch in longer lines of beauty over the face of the perfect earth, the desert gives voice, and answers,—

“I am the desert, the eternal desert, also beloved of the sun. I have been since the beginning of this one of God’s worlds, and I shall be until the end of the world shall come. The sun that kisses me, and impregnates me with warmth and heat, has taught me that in some form and in some place I shall always be, and so I am content, and all is well with me. I stand for quiet and for peace, and I am the visible emblem of quietness and of peace in the world. My limits, that lie beyond the scope of vision, are to teach men of the boundless

extent of right and truth; my peace is to teach them that all is good, and that to all will come peace. I that am finite stand as a visible emblem of infinity. I that am mortal am an irrefutable proof of immortality. And, because I am great and silent and mysterious, I speak unerringly to the depth and greatness and silence and mystery of the souls of humans, that, like me, were made by nature and by nature's God."

The desert sometimes has a sterner message. If one appears before her in pride and arrogance, she will say,—

"Oh, poverty-stricken human; you are among the least of all things in the sight of God, for he has given you less than the gifts that are to his other creatures. Your days are less than the days of the stone, your joys are less than the joys of the lark, your understanding is less than my own, and all that was vouchsafed you was an uncertain few of nights and days. Yet have you manacled these few nights with terror, and hindered your days with loads of folly and vain desire. Seek not so much after riches, for your flesh melts, and soon you sink back into the elements of nature. Embitter not your souls with envy, for you and those whom your envy causes you to hate are but as the beetles and the grass and the leaves,—inheritors only of inevitable death. Be not selfish, for your weak self is but as a mote in a ray of light. God will not stop the blowing

of one of the least of his winds in order that you may triumph over your neighbor, or that your selfish vanity may be gratified. And all the largesse you pay to self-appointed agents of the Immutable Right will not add a single day to your days, nor will it relieve you from paying a full right for the least of your wrongs."

But the desert has the same spirit as its mother earth, who speaks messages of hope and peace to all her creatures. And when we seek wisdom from the desert, and listen to it in reverence, it says,—

"Come to me, for I am solitude, and in solitude is wisdom. Come to me, for I am silence, and in silence is communion with God. Come to me, for I am beauty, and beauty is a thing beyond the creation of Cæsar or of Midas. But come not to me at all unless you come in humility and right thinking, for in exacting those things I am as one with God, and with me a king is no greater than a beggar. But if you will know me, and study me, and love me, I will give you peace, and a great content, and a knowledge that is beyond what you may gain from men, or from events, or from books."



THE DESERT HAS THE SAME SPIRIT AS ITS MOTHER EARTH,
WHO SPEAKS MESSAGES OF HOPE AND PEACE

III
A ROSARY OF CITIES

There are no beautiful cities; it is only that some are less hideous than others. For mankind, with all its wondrous wit, has not yet been able,—and it has not tried very hard,—to devise a city where for every palace there are not a hundred hovels, where for every being living a full life there are not a hundred bending under the weights of penury and toil. But, as art goes, cities are among the best things yet created by the wan, colorless arts of men.

III

A ROSARY OF CITIES

WE all know too well the selfish, pompous and arrogant cities that so many people are so mistaken as to think make up the chiefest glories of the world. But I like to forget all of them but Paris—and often also to forget Paris,—and to make for myself a rosary of smaller and fairer and dearer cities than those which are marked by the great beads upon humanity's strand of opinion. And so I write, not of the great cities where princely riches and abject misery dwell together, but of lesser ones whose individuality is easier to understand, whose characters and whose souls are more akin to those of human beings. As culture finds its first expression in utilitarianism, then in art, and then, discarding both,—which are artificial and incomplete,—goes on to an appreciation of nature, so I believe that to know first great cities and then lesser ones is knowledge that leads on to an appreciation of those places so infinitely greater and more beautiful and more uplifting than any city has ever been,—as the green fields of the country, the wild woods,

the seas, the silent, majestic mountains, and the sublime stretches of the wide, soundless deserts.

Cities, like individual entities, have both bodies and souls. There are some whose souls are wholly unlovely that possess as fair bodies as do any of the things upon the earth that were made by the hands of men. Of such are many of the Oriental cities. If one stands upon a height and looks down upon the roofs and domes and towers and minarets of old Tunis, he gazes upon one of the most beautiful pictures in all the world's rich gallery. Resting in the soft embraces of the smiling waters that enfold it, guarded by the mountains that fondly look down upon it, the great white city,—so ancient that the date of its foundation was forgotten before men began to write down the imperfect records which they dignify with the name of history,—spreads before him like a panorama, like a great map in relief. And what thoughts come of the men and women, the toilers and players, the winners and losers, the generations and races and nations that have come and gone, that have risen and fallen, in this venerable old mother of cities! Primitive barbarians,—of the same blood as the tribes of the Chawia, who still lead their wild lives in the Aures Mountains on the borders of the Great Desert,—once dwelt in Tunis. Then the Phœnicians, so long ago that the tales of Dido and Æneas are but folk-lore and myths. Then the Ro-

mans,—for great Hannibal was beaten,—the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Turks, the French,—race after race, ruler after ruler, system after system,—and countless millions of groping, struggling humans vainly seeking through their spans of life for something that perhaps, if they could but have known it, nature had bountifully placed ready to their hands! Temples have been reared only to be pulled down to make way for newer temples that also passed in their turn. Creeds have risen from the ashes of older creeds, systems called true and eternal have faded before newer systems,—and that white ghost of a city over there, gazing with unseeing eyes down into the living sea, is the ghost of great Carthage, that once was mighty and now is dead. Yet eternal Tunis, that was old before Carthage was born, drowses on in its seat of beauty. Surrounded by its blue waters and its everlasting hills,—steeped in indolence, sunken in sensuality, blinded by superstition,—barbarous, beautiful Tunis is the one thing created by man that has persisted during all the chaos of the death of races and systems and creeds of which it has been the witness and the theater. Yet perhaps those things, after all, did not pass in chaos. Evolution can be but little hastened or hindered, and it is probable that those things,—marking forward steps of evolution,—persisted until their usefulness was finished, until the world and humanity needed them no more,

and then passed,—orderly, and in accordance with the laws that underlie progression. But they have not left much in Tunis; as is also true of Egypt, the wisdom and the good that were born there have long since taken flight to newer lands in other climes, and Tunis has retained from the centuries only its beauty and its iniquity. But if we should be able to look deep into the souls of men we should often find, under fair and pleasing exteriors, that which would inspire our contempt, and cause us to forget the good which makes up so much of the character of all. So let us be content with seeing only that which is good; and let us not be harder in dealing with cities, and so let us forget the bigotry and evil of this old monument of humanity's progress,—and let us admire Tunis for the marvellous beauty that is its heritage. For the evil, in the long plans of nature, will pass, but the beauty will endure forever.

There is another city, not so fair of form, but better in its soul than Tunis, that is another great document filled with the records of the passing of time and the groping progress of our race. Florence is full of interest for all, and profound must be the student of cities who can extract from it even an infinitesimal part of the great stores of wisdom it has garnered from the vanished ages and generations. With Florence the interest it holds is not of things of the present, but of the glori-

ous past the city has known. Florence is old, and lives in retrospect and reminiscence. The mind of the visitor turns, not to the spirit of the Florence of to-day, but to the spirits of older Florences,—to epochs when the city counted among its sons Dante, and Boccaccio, and Cellini, and was the workshop at times of Botticelli and Raphael and Michelangelo. What wonderful proofs of the potency of beauty were given by those old Florentines! And how they proved that to touch the minds and hearts of human beings with literature and art is to accomplish things beyond the power of kings and warriors! And how utterly they failed in their attempt to rival the marvellousness and wonder and beauty of even the least of the things that nature has strewn with such a prodigal hand over all the lands and waters of the earth! But they carried culture generations in advance of mere sordid utilitarianism, and while they lived and worked, Florence lived, and was a waking, moving factor in the progress of mankind. Now Florence sleeps, and perhaps will never awaken again. No literature is born in Florence now, for the decadent, soulless collections of words that are now strung together,—even though moulded in a kind of beauty of form,—make the world and life no better, and would be better left unwritten. No great pictures are painted there, and those who call themselves painters fabricate inharmonious creations as destitute of

real beauty as are the most of the works of the great hordes of painters in France who proffer to the world the useless, soulless things which they vainly try to make pass for Art, and which are doomed only to ever swifter and swifter oblivion. No more great sculptures are carved in Florence from the white rocks that come down as of yore from Carrara,—and the spirit of the city is as much in the past as is that ancient and weary spirit that broods over its old monastery of Certosa.

Cities are like people, so much so indeed that often they remind us of individuals or types that we have known; and Florence is like an old French châtelaine, who has outlived the rule and the hopes of the Royalists, who has lost her husband and her sons and her joys in the lost wars, whose lands and possessions have dwindled until all that is left is the beautiful château of an older and better architecture and its priceless contents of marvellous treasures of art, which she has managed, through all her vicissitudes, to retain. And, like such a châtelaine, the city lives in the recitations of the better times of her fortunes, of the glorious,—and dead,—past ages when she was great in all the ways that cities have ever known. One looks over Florence, resting in its fair Arno valley as an ancient and beautiful jewel might rest in its casket; but he feels as though he were gazing upon the picture of an epoch that is

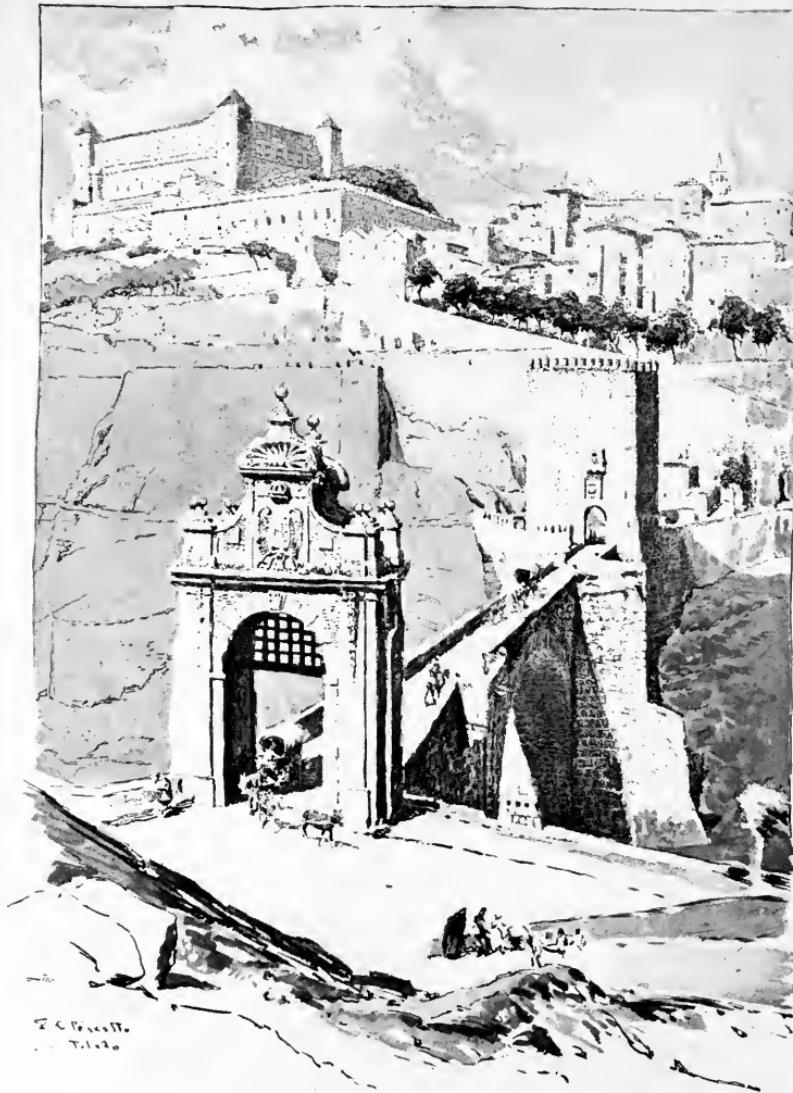
eternally past, or reading in sweetest verse the tale of a time that will be no more.

There are three cities that seem to be but wraiths of their former selves, wraiths of what the cities were in the older times when they were instinct with youth and life. They are Venice, and Granada, and Toledo. Sometimes the spirit of the dead Venice seems to return, to again gild her ancient and crumbling halls with something of the glory she knew in life, to rest again amidst the priceless and matchless works of human hearts and brains and hands which she left as a heritage to mankind. But it is only an illusion, and it is but the wraith of a spirit,—the ghost of a ghost,—that returns. And as it is with Venice so is it with Toledo and Granada. The race that builded them in beauty and endowed them with splendor is gone from their sites,—is indeed almost gone from the world, for the decadent Moors are not of the same clay as were their great forefathers who builded the Alhambra and the Toledo gates, who progressed in astronomy and medicine, and cultivated the sciences and encouraged the arts, and who wrought those great poems in stone that stand as their monuments in the fair lands that they lost. Toledo is even more than a souvenir of the Moors,—it is a record in stone of nearly all that has been wrought in Spain. But it is the memories of the Moors that are the most pleasant ones,—for the later

ones descend even to memories of the demon Torquemada, who wrought such evil in the name of God, and of harsh Charles the Fifth, who marred the city with his unlovely palace. To enjoy the beauty and charm of this wraith of a city it is better not to enter it at all, but to follow the Tagus to the Alcantara Gate, and to imagine that it is, as of yore, the entrance to a Moorish city during the golden age of the Moors. And indeed one half expects to see some burnoused rider clatter through the gate and over the bridge on his way to join his sloe-eyed Fatimas who dwell within. But the Moors are forever gone from Toledo. And as one turns his memory from this beautiful ghost on the Tagus to that other that still stands in loveliness on the heights above the more modern Granada, and then to exquisite Venice sinking in the beauty of death into the sea, there involuntarily comes to mind that line:

“Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever!”

But grief for the past will not bring the past to us again. And deep in our souls we know that this truth is in accordance with greater wisdom than we could have shown if power over the past had been given us. We know that to-day is a better time than yesterday, that the little span of time called Now is the best time of all that has been or will be. And it is well, perhaps, to turn from the cities whose lives have been in the past,



T. C. Peacock
— Toledo

TO ENJOY THE BEAUTY AND CHARM OF THIS WRAITH OF A CITY,
FOLLOW THE TAGUS TO THE ALCANTARA GATE

and contemplate one that grieves not for the past nor has apprehensions for the future, but is content to revel in the joys and glories of the present. And such a city is Nice. Some cities are like women, and remind us of women we have met and have known a little or much. Nice is like a finished, polished, educated, happy woman of the world,—one just in the middle age of youth, when the constraint and shyness of girlhood are past, and the sadness of old age not yet begun. This beautiful daughter of the South is a favored child of fortune, and was born with a golden spoon in her mouth. All the lands of the world have sent her presents, and have sent the merriest and best of their sons and daughters to at once instruct her and assist her in her two great arts of being happy and of imparting happiness. Her house is a marble palace and its garden is an elysium. Her estate is bounded on one side by the shining sea, and is girt about on the other sides with mountains upon whose slopes olives and figs and palms and roses and violets and many-hued flowers grow and bloom in abundance and forever. Only mild winds blow over her domains, and sounds of laughter and joy and song are ever heard in her halls. And in her place of beauty Nice sits enthroned, and looks upon the passing years as upon a pleasant procession formed for her entertainment, and laughs with whoever is there to laugh with her; and, too,—but tell it not,—she flirts. Instead of

the useful Confucian motto of "Work ever," she has two of her own, "Be happy ever," and "Love ever." And she is always in love,—not enough to break hearts, but only enough to make them palpitate with pleasure; not enough to cause tragedies, but just enough to prevent them. It is impossible to enter the atmosphere that surrounds her without falling in love with her,—but it is wholesome love that knows not jealousy. It is not only her sensuous charm that attracts, for this coquette among cities is very wise and very philosophic in a winning, graceful way. She has paraphrased the old query of sorrowful philosophy, and she asks: "Why should the spirit of mortal be sad?" To philosophers she says that philosophy should be lived and put into practice as well as written down in books. And the philosopher whose bust adorns her salon is Epicurus,—that misunderstood man who, for telling us to rationally enjoy the goods the gods provide us and extract sweetness from the passing years, has been unjustly stigmatized as profligate and sybarite. If Calvin and Wesley could each have had the good fortune of a vacation in a place like Nice, the later centuries would have known more of tolerance and charity and sympathy; for in Nice one becomes convinced that God is the friend and protector, and not the enemy and persecutor, of the creatures he has brought into being. And if old Kháyyám could have come to Nice, casting away at her

gates the parts of his message that are hopeless and cold, and bearing to her only the parts that are beautiful and true, she would have met him with embraces, and she would have reared to him a statue of gold; for, shorn of its despair and freed from its sorrow, the message of Omar Kháyyám is what Nice follows as her law of life.

Nice is wholly Latin, and is at once French and Italian. She inherited philosophy and wit from one of her ancestors and joyousness from the other. She is not serious, and you know that all the time; but for all that it is long before you forget the pleasure it gave you to have this fair Latin city smile into your eyes and make you remember that in all other places in the world too much seriousness mars all joys. And she is always clad in silks and laces, and garlanded with flowers. She is more like a woman of the world, like a sweet, self-sure, gracious, witty woman,—“half angel and half child,”—than even is Paris; for under and behind all its gaiety Paris thinks and works, and Nice does neither.

The lotus, lost from the Nile-lands, blooms anew in Nice, and those who go there eat of it and forget. The Fountain of Perpetual Youth is concealed within the limits of the city, and the invisible spray of its waters permeates all the atmosphere of the place, intermingled with the spray of the Fountains of Joy. But only those

who will follow Poe's rules for happiness,—“cast aside ambition, live in the open air, and have the love of a woman,”—may really bathe in the magic waters. The reward for those who make the full surrender is the stopping for the time of the advance of age,—and even more,—for stiff old Russian princes and stern old American notables soon lose the wrinkles from their faces and their souls, and play wholesome games with their grandchildren, and remind their wives that long ago they mutually held a belief to the effect that love is ever young. In Nice-land even the peasants are poets, and they harvest flowers instead of corn. It is always summer there, and time does not pass; the few clocks that exist are kept only from force of habit. She is of royal blood, this bright-eyed Nice, and is veritable Queen of the Azure Coast. But her neighbors are of baser clay. If one passes to the eastward he soon comes to an imaginary line,—whose influence, though, is very real,—beyond which tired, hungry, ragged old Italy is trying to sing as it painfully toils to rear a better future upon the poor red rocks that it calls soil. If one goes to the north he is almost at once upon barbarism and squalor, for the descendants of the Ligurians are yet there, living not much better than did their savage ancestors when the first Greek colonists found them. To the west are a few self-assertive towns, admiring themselves, and taking the pleasures of life sadly as

does the nation from which they chiefly draw their lives. And after Toulon one is again fully in the wide world of effort and accomplishment, of commerce and war, of ambition, and jealousy, and uncharitableness, and trouble. But go where he will he will ever bear with him memories of the graces and charms of sweet, careless Nice, and of the perfumes of the flowers that surround her.

But Nice is not the only happy city, nor the only one like a woman. If one should imagine,—as, of course, one should not,—that very long ago and very far away he had had a beautiful, bright-eyed Maya sweetheart, and if he should seek for one that would be among cities what she was among women, I think Guadalajara would be the city he would choose. For Guadalajara is voluptuous, and beautiful, and sensuous, and she laughs the quiet, happy laughter of the Southland, and cares not for dull books and unproven lore, and knows much of gentleness, and joy, and love,—and she wears garlands of wild orchids in her hair! It is quiet in Guadalajara,—quiet without being somber or sad. There is rest there,—rest that is neither torpor nor idleness. To live under that kindly tropic sun, to pass the bright days under the matchless skies of Jalisco, to gaze at night up at the constellations that are not known in colder climes, to smell the scents of the myriads of rich flowers, to join in the peaceful and con-

tented lives of the peaceful and unhurried inhabitants of this Flower City of the Indians, to sit at night under the trees in the bright plaza, with the golden-domed cathedral seeming to call out that it, too, is a living and a happy thing that has managed to get in tune with the simple hearts of those who cherish it, is almost enough in itself to justify one for having borne all the ills and suffered all the evils that we find on our swift journey between the two eternities. Will you tell this beautiful Indian maiden of a city that you are ambitious? She will placidly and happily laugh, and ask why. Will you tell her that it is the mission and the duty of a man to work during the few days that are given him before that eternal night cometh when no man can work? She will entwine you in her soft, round arms, press flowers to your face for you to inhale their enchanted perfumes, point to the peace of the ultramarine skies that rest over her in perpetual tranquillity, and tell you that she has learned from her skies and her mountains and her bees and birds and flowers that the course of wisdom lies in really living, not in spending our all-too-few years in ceaselessly making ready to live,—in making work and its profits means to an end and not merely ends in themselves. Environment is responsible for many things,—even morals, the philosophers say; and from her point of view this glorious barbarian princess may be right, and anyhow she could not think other-

wise, nor could any who rest under the eternal sunshine
that gilds her splendid home.

From the cities that smile to old Nantes that toils
is a far cry, and yet Nantes has a personality, too, per-
haps even more akin to ours than the others, for with
her, rain is mingled with her sunshine, and earnest-
ness is combined with her lighter moods. Old
legends say that there was a time in the land now called
Brittany when it was populated by a goodly and a
kindly race, with no rulers and no servers, among
whom no one owned property, and who earned and
shared all things together; and it is said that in that
happy time all men were brave and strong and true,
and all women tender and beautiful and kind, and that
life flowed on without illness or weakness until the nat-
ural span was a hundred and twenty years instead of
the paltry three-score and ten that now is marked as a
rich allotment. But other races came during those
great migrations whose tales are lost in the mists of
the time that preceded history, and with them came
new laws of power and caste, and the golden age was
over. Later came the Romans, worshipping their gods
of conquest and commerce, and bringing that iron thing
that even until now continues to be called Progress; and
they called the peoples barbarians, and so they took
away their lands, and builded walled colonies among
them, and divided themselves and the conquered peo-

ples into arbitrary classes. The generations and the conquerors passed, but the institutions remained; and in time the descendants of those ancient happy ones again became content. And it came to be said that in this land the plebeians loved the aristocrats, and the aristocrats guarded and protected the well-being of the plebeians, and both high and low came to believe that they had properly solved the question of the relationship of classes. And some natural and good results came from their beliefs. There were in this country thousands of men who had helped to build and protect it, and thousands more were to be born, all of whom should have had some rights over the fate of the country where destiny had placed them. But the country was deemed to belong to a family, and in time it became the inheritance of a slender girl,—who delighted to wear the grim arms of war, and who, forgetting the old poet-tales of love, determined to wed only a king. With her great dowry she bought a queen's crown, and Brittany was joined to France, and old Nantes, from being a capital, became only a provincial town. The Bretons, though, did not much grieve, for their old institutions persisted, and they continued to live out their lives as it pleased them to live. And then,—for weak human heads are so easily turned by unlimited power,—Louis the Fourteenth, who had become the owner of this as well as of all

the lands of France,—cracked his insolent whip, not only in the face of the Paris parliament, but in the faces of humanity and posterity, and the first seed of the French Revolution was sown. Humanity later wrecked the throne upon which the supreme egotist had sat, and rolled the severed head of his descendant in the dust. And old gray Nantes, the lover of the ancient *régime*, protested in her heart. The French Revolution continues, although the historians do not always note its progress, as its weapons now are not sword and fire and the guillotine; and old Nantes continues to protest, and in Republican, free-thinking France she remains Royalist and Catholic,—and her dreams, like those of Florence, are in an age that has passed, and much of the content she once knew is now forgotten. The fault may lie with Nantes, but, be that as it may, the battle for bread seems harder for those who must toil than in the best of the older days. But that grim, time-old battle for bread is always so much in evidence that for once we may be allowed to forget it as we go into this old town that is the relic of an age that in other places is almost past. And so we will look upon the crumbling walls of the cathedral that will never be finished, we will listen to the chimes of the many churches through which the city pours out its sorrows and its joys, we will visit the quaint old “places,” and the winding, narrow streets that remind

one of Italy and are survivals of those hard old times when streets were made crooked so that bullets might not carry too far in them, we will enter the gloomy château that stands as a reminder of the feudalism that is going out of the world for the good of the world, and we will enjoy the quiet, placid, tranquil charm of the ancient city without burdening ourselves with its griefs and troubles. Sometimes it is a boon to be a stranger. One may then look upon cities from better heights and clearer viewpoints. He knows that biting ambition, bitter envy, arrogance, slander, bigotry, hatred, and all injustices thrive within them all in greater or less degree, but to him those evils have not meaning, at any rate not local meaning. And if one enters Nantes to view it from a stranger's standpoint he will find a city of many charms, a city of wealth, and culture and refinement,—wealth that does not vulgarly flaunt and advertise itself, culture that is not arrogant, and refinement that is not egotistical. The city, in its spirit, is a survival, the relic of a system that was overturned by the wild Revolutionists who sowed their heavy crop of evil in preparation for the harvest of good that has begun to appear in the world. And in the olden days Nantes was wrong, for it said that men should be divided and classified, and should enjoy the riches of the world (which is only lent to humanity by God) according to the accidents of their birth. The

Revolutionists said that all men are equal, in that statement going farther than nature herself has ever gone. And as one leaves the busy trafficking and bickering of the city and wanders along the cooler and better paths that skirt the banks of the Loire and wind in and out among the fertile little farms where men are winning their right to live in the oldest and most noble way known to the race, he thinks that both the city and the Revolutionists were wrong, and that Plato and Napoleon,—for antipodes are sometimes near together at points,—were more nearly right. For Plato said that all men should have equal chance to prove their merit and win the rewards of life, and Napoleon said that he believed in an aristocracy, but in one based entirely upon worth and achievement. But one may turn from the involved plexus of right and wrong to learn one true thing from this continuing port-city of that forgotten tribe called the Nannetés, a thing which may also be learned from any city in the world,—that the best city is a good place to go from, that the country, where trees put forth their leaves, and flowers bloom, and birds sing, and the life principle stirs in seeds, and crops ripen, and nature gives forth her stores to all who will win and deserve them,—that the country, less modified from nature than are cities, is the most natural, the most logical, and the most rational place for humans to abide, and that if cities will be lovely the country must be let into them, as is the case at Paris.

IV

A ROSARY OF ISLANDS

"Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy
skies,
Breaths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of
Paradise."

IV

A ROSARY OF ISLANDS

THE charm of the islands of the sea has been known to all peoples in all times. The Greeks placed the imaginary habitations of the race of the blessed upon islands, and all poets have dreamed of islands, shut away from the greater and grosser world, where life could flow on in peace and joy, free from the cares and strifes of the larger areas. Utopia was an island. We may not know why islands appeal to us so strongly, but it is enough to know that they do. Much of the sweetness of life is vitiated and often wholly lost if we continually try to analyze all things. I continue to be sorry for that misguided German biologist who worked so assiduously in his attempt to dissect and analyze love according to scientific methods. So I shall go on loving islands even if I cannot give an explicit definition of the reason that inspires my love.

Who that has sailed on the Tyrrhenian Sea, on such days and under such a sun and such skies and floating clouds as inspired the brush of Turner, can wonder at our love for islands? As one sails there he sees something rising in the west,—vast, shadowy, mystical,

and beautiful,—that seems to float between the blue sea and the bluer heavens. It seems to belong to that world of things of which Poe dreamed,—the things that need have no other reason for being than beauty. It is wild Corsica. And farther on, like a jewel flashing under the sun, lies peaceful Elba,—the petty prison of that Corsican who wrought such mighty evil, and from whose works such mighty good has come, even if the good is not worth the fearful price it cost. It is better to see these islands from a distance, for the narrowness, sordidness, and pettiness of the lives of their half-barbarous inhabitants is not then in evidence.

If one stands upon the quays of Naples and looks into the city he sees as great a picture of human misery,—even though those who endure it know a kind of sunny joy,—as exists in all the tired land of Italy. But he has but to turn his face toward the sea, and there across the smiling bay, shining under the sun like a Venus-jewel freshly born from the happy waves, dimples and glistens Capri, the sweetest and fairest island of the Italian coast. Capri has history enough to rejoice even the heart of a pedant, but it is not its history that makes it interesting and attractive. It is one land that is happy even though having a history. Those cheery islanders are Italian but more than Italian. Whatever we find in the so harshly misjudged lower Italians that we do not like the natives of Capri



WHO THAT HAS SAILED ON THE TYRRHENIAN SEA . . . CAN WONDER
AT OUR LOVE FOR ISLANDS?

have not. And in what greater land of the greater world can we find such a proportion of happy people and such a small percentage that are unhappy? To work in Capri seems as play seems in other places. And to smile, and laugh, and show white teeth between red lips, and dance in joy, and sing from the rising of the sun until eyes close in sleep, is as natural in Capri as it is to breathe, and to complain against the injustice of fate, in other and colder and more unlovely places.

And away across the trackless leagues of the sounding seas, that continue forever and forever to sing the great songs that we cannot understand, its shores washed by another sea as beautiful as the Mediterranean, its brow fanned by warmer breezes than the Italian islands know, lies another island that was even more beautiful than this fairest daughter of Italy. For before its great cataclysm of horror and woe fell upon it, before its once lovely mountain rent itself asunder and made of its island home a worse Hell than even Dante or the agents of the Inquisition could conceive, Martinique was the fairest, most lovely island of all the myriads that dot the seven seas. To come upon Martinique in those better days, to catch a first glimpse of majestic old Pelée rising,—then in peace,—above the green and yellow fields and the mysterious forests that fringed his base, then to see the white town

nestling in such restful peace against the land, with splendid royal palms rising in truly regal splendor behind it, was to gaze upon one of the fairest scenes that travelers win among the rewards they receive for the hardships entailed upon them as they make their journeys to the far lands of the earth. The peace of the island, the brightness of its blue skies, the soft whisperings of the cooling Trade Winds, the content of the laughing, dimpling sea, all seemed to be reflected in the islanders themselves, and they were, and are, the best and most amiable of all the Caribbean populations. But even in that beauteous island, whose willing soil gives forth in great abundance in exchange for little toils of toil, where it would seem that peace and plenty should go forever hand in hand, the lot of mankind is very hard. Men toil throughout their spans of life in order only that they may eat, drink and be sheltered; and women,—shaped like the marble goddesses of ancient Greece,—walk up and down the weary paths of those rugged mountains throughout all the bright hours of the sunny days for the mere pittances that sustain their lives. Often they bear,—with their other load, for they are beasts of burden,—young children also upon their heads. But toil,—which is not the same as loved labors willingly performed,—and the struggle of mankind for existence, and the limitations of our happiness because of

our ignorance, are things that one need not go to Martinique to see, and it is enough to remember the glinting of the rays of the tropic sun upon the waves of deeper blue than are known in Northern climes, to remember the schools of dolphins and flying fishes that leap and play upon the surface of the happy sea, and the chambered nautilii, mere specks of sensate flesh, who unfurl their living sails and steer their courses as truly as do those other specks among which we are numbered. All Southlands should be places of joy, where grim care and the hard destiny of humanity should be forgotten. And, too, too much is said of human misery,—for, when the whole account is considered, humanity knows much more of joy than of misery. How may we know what joys brighten the lives of those bearers of burdens in Martinique? But joys they surely know, as do all humans.. A perverted, self-hypnotized Schopenhauer may convince many that our race dwells in evil, surrounded by ever-impending terrors, and under the malignant persecutions of a malevolent Nature that pursues us with evil from our cradles to our graves. But it is all false,—and deep down in his inmost heart of hearts each one knows for himself that it is false. The world is very fair, life is very sweet, our age is a good age, and, so far as men can read its purposes, the whole destiny of man is good,—even the death that ends it, which is as

natural as life, and which may be but a new birth into an even better world. And if that should be true, what matter if we go on to other worlds because of the bursting of volcanoes such as Pelée or in the slower process of inevitable nature? Science has proven that neither space nor time have limits. What matter, then, in what little corner of limitless space we pass some of the great measures of time?

Islands, like cities, seem to resemble their populations. Hayti should be, it would seem, as lovely a place as exists in all the Antilles,—but it is not. Its soil seems saturated with the fearsome superstitions and dark, savage rites of its half-wild inhabitants. Curacao seems as dull, as uninteresting, and as self-important as its drowsing people. And Corsica, in spite of the grandeur of its towering mountains, seems sullen, fierce, and in its soul unlovely. But one may find enough places on the mainland that have disagreeable features, and in islands we will only go to those that know how to appreciate their own good fortune in being separated from the ambitions and madnesses, the vices and stupidities, of the continents.

Tucked away under the shelter of a projecting Bréton cape there is a tiny island that to those who know it, and have divined the beauties of its spirit, is one of the best places in all Europe. It has no great architectural monuments, no great galleries, no pal-

aces; no great marts of commerce or devouring bourses of finance exist upon it. But it contains things that are all too rapidly taking their flight from the greater France,—the quiet content of simplicity, the childlike belief in the goodness of God and of destiny, the real fraternity of people. And this sweet little island of Bréhat has another inestimable advantage over France,—it knows not of the philosophers. Voltaire's words and influence have not crossed the water that divides it from the mainland, Schopenhauer is a name unknown within its narrow boundaries, and the name and melancholy of Marcus Aurelius are unknown as well; and the soulless, hopeless philosophy that is Godless and creedless,—and above all arrogant,—which is blighting the very soul of modern France, has found no lodgment there. For its people are too simple to have become intoxicated with a little intellectuality and from a few half-learned lessons, as has France, and their lives run on in the same untroubled grooves that were known in the younger days of the country of which their tiny islet is a part. But they have other evils,—although with them they do not much bear the appearance of evils. They bow down in old superstitions, and heavy dogmas are fastened about their creed and their minds. But, anyhow, of two evils they bear the one that is least, for even dog-

matism and superstitions are better things than hopeless philosophies.

Perhaps one should not tarry too long at Bréhat. To have the best memories of its charms and delights, of its simple people and their simple lives, one should see and go away. For beyond the strip of water that makes its landward boundary there come echoes of that great human cry and spur, "So much to do, so little done," and one feels anew that while quiet has charms, work has more; and he knows that the world is better because all men do not live the peaceful, quiet lives of these simple islanders. For labor has rewards to give, even greater than those given by repose.

Set like a jewel on the breast of the Mediterranean, midway between old Europe and older Africa, and taking something from them both, is the happy island of Mallorca,—really a happy land, containing no paupers and no millionaires, whose inhabitants have no need to fare forth into the world in search of anything. To come upon Mallorca in the early morning, at its port of Palma, to see the golden walls of its old Gothic cathedral reddening and glowing in the morning sunlight, and the white and red town behind it, is to see another of the best of the world's great gallery of pictures. But it is not Palma that is fullest of interest in Mallorca, nor that lauded palace of Miramar, which is so wofully disappointing,—being but the

tawdry, tinsel toy of an idle rich man, lacking in beauty, plan and finish. Hard by the northern shore of the island there lies a better thing to see,—a white town, like a silver chalice in a velvet case, and which, as one ascends the tall mountains from it, takes on newer shades of beauty the farther it is left below.

To cross the island to the eastward, through the best tilled soil in all Europe or Africa, through great orchards and groves of almonds and of olives beside which the veteran tree of Beaulieu is young, past the quaint, picturesque towns that are neither European nor African, and down at last to the dimpling sea again, is an excursion worth going to Mallorca to perform if one did nothing else. The rural and pastoral scenes of this island unconsciously remind one of the wood-cut pictures from old bibles. But where the sea is reached again is the greatest thing Mallorca contains,—the wonderful grottoes. Usually grottoes and caverns are the most overrated things that travelers find on their journeys. The caverns of Manitou are worth seeing; and the famed Blue Grotto of Capri once, and if one has idle time on his hands. But the grottoes of Mallorca are as different from this class as a Gothic cathedral is different from a railway station. A Mallorcan peasant was our guide into these underground temples of peace. We passed with him deep down into the bowels of the earth, under the very

waves of the sea itself, and then when he lighted his magnesia lamp we discovered that we stood in the presence of something that rose above a natural curiosity,—a real something, intangible, inexpressible, yet existing. Before us, changing by their own color the light of our guide's lamp, were disclosed as perfect structures, as harmonious things of beauty, as can be found in all the world. Architects might copy from the forms of these hidden caverns, and all the forms they know would be added to and improved upon. Waters lie in some of the caverns, sometimes widening even into lakes. They have lain there since first the sea submerged the mighty mountain chain of which Mallorca is but a projecting crest,—lain there in purity, undefiled by anything,—for nothing that has life, either vegetable or animal, exists in those ancient virgin waters.

To attempt to describe these marvelous grottoes would be as futile as to attempt to describe the star-spangled sky to one born blind. The form, wrought in perfection, that has been modeled in them, passes human words. The eternal yet not fearsome silence that pervades them also passes description, but above even the perfection and the silence there is a greater Something in these places of beauty that were so carefully hidden away under the earth and under the rolling waves of the sea. We felt that we stood in the in-

visible presence of the All-pervading Soul,—in the presence of something higher, better, holier than we had known before. Old terrors dropped from us as we stood in this sacred temple of Nature. We no longer dreaded the significance of that dread word Nirvana,—for if the eternal peace that is said to come when all that is is again merged with all that is, is like unto the great yet beautiful peace of these grottoes, we shall find it better than any other thing that could be. We had been conducted into this holy of holies of Nature by a crude Mallorcan peasant, but in the presence of the majestic, mysterious perfection of peace and beauty that surrounded us all he was no longer a peasant, but he stood forth, in his proper person as a human being, with all the rights, and heir to the same splendid destiny, that pertain to all humans.

Miners know the joy of seeing the sunlight after having been for hours underground. We all knew that joy, but at the great grottoes we did not feel it,—and even the light of the sun and the waves of the smiling sea looked poorer and more mean than we had ever seen them,—for we had stood in the presence of the soul of an island,—in the presence of a something that may be like the Great Soul that, in greater perfection and more perfect peace, still remains hidden from our eyes.

Kings and armies with banners, from century to century, came down upon the rich fields of Mallorca. They fought their little wars, held their little pageants, and passed on to their little graves. Towns were reared and destroyed, generations passed, men came and went like the grasses of the meadows, knowing not of that wondrous soul of their island that rested there, half under the island's rim, half under the sea. The kings and armies and men and generations went, but the grottoes remained, pure, beautiful, and perfect,—emblems of the perfection, the patience, and the beauty of Nature, and as symbols for the realization of all the high and soaring dreams, of all the dreams of love and joy and peace, that all men, even the meanest, have known. For whoso looks upon this beauty, that is neither of the earth nor of the sea nor of the heavens, knows that he has gazed upon a visible image of two of the great things for which the souls of humans pine,—perfection and peace. And we can go on with greater patience, too, for we have come to know that perfection is not yet attainable, and that perfect peace is not for us in our lives in flesh.

V

EGYPT

“Think, in this batter’d Caravanserai
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp
Abode his destin’d Hour, and went his way.”

V.

EGYPT

LIKE a great green serpent with a shining triangular head, the fertile land composing the valley and delta of the Nile lies between the mighty encompassing deserts of Libya and Arabia. Coming out of the mysterious Southland, winding its way for thousands of miles between limitless areas of sand, its banks lined for narrow distances with green fields and the habitations of men, flows the wondrous stream of Nile,—the one thing that makes human life possible in all the land of Egypt. It flows from sources that for ages were undiscovered, and which even in this day of boasted knowledge are yet incompletely known. And the Nile is Egypt. In its long course, that begins in the great regions of rains, on through the great rainless lands, and through the fertile valley of its own enriching, it passes the countries of various peoples, and the tombs and ruined temples and palaces of other peoples who existed, and ceased to exist, in the first dim dawn of history. It flows through the lands of savages,—perhaps cannibals,—on through the coun-

tries of hunters, herdsmen, tillers of the soil, past the cities of tradesmen, and down at last to the cities of those who fare forth upon the seas. From its sources to its mouths the ascending order in the scale of human civilization that exists along its course is much as that noted by scientists in diagramming the slow progress of the human race from savagery toward the as yet but dimly dreamed of goal called Civilization.

While it is more than Egypt, yet the Nile is Egypt, and has always been Egypt, and will always be Egypt. Whether Tanisian, or Theban, or Nubian, or Persian, or Assyrian, or Jew, or Greek, or Roman, or Turk, or Briton has directed the destinies of the people, they all have had to bow to the Nile, and they have been able to extract from the ruled or conquered land only such tribute as could be taken from the wealth the great river gave. From long before that long-gone time when half-mythical Mena formed the Nomes of the first-known Egypt into one kingdom,—from the primal time when first a human being stood upright in its valley—the beneficent Nile has given all that Egypt has had of food, and drink, and substance, and health, and life, and tribute for the robbers and tax-leviers and kings and priests and commanders. The hot simoons of the desert have been cooled upon its broad bosom; its never-failing inundations have al-

ways fertilized the fields, and its annual renewing of the soil with loam from the far-away mountains has caused Egypt to be a land of perpetual fertility.

To the east of the Nile the Arabian Desert,—beautiful beyond words to describe, but where, except in a few narrow places, Nature forbids the habitancy of men,—stretches away to the Red Sea, and far on into Asia. And to the west, frowning as though in hatred of the green Nile oasis, is the fierce Libyan Desert that, with its great mother, the Sahara, holds so much of Africa in a cruel grasp, and which is as unlovely and repelling as its sister of Arabia is bright and beautiful. Egypt,—the Egypt of life, and fertility, and men, and history, and tradition,—lies, a green and smiling land, between these two deserts, as a human life lies between the two great eternities that extend before birth and after death; as the moment of the Present lies between the lost Past and the undiscovered Future.

Egypt is the strangest land, the weirdest land, the saddest land, the most mysterious land, in all the world. It is a land of dreams that never came true, a land of memories and of monuments, a great cemetery stretching from ancient Ethiopia to the sea, a great grave, hundreds of miles long, in which is buried perhaps as many millions of humans as exist upon the earth to-day. Palæolithic and Neolithic men left here

their crude proofs of existence,—their stone messages to wondering posterity,—and passed into death. The ancient, and really unknown, builders of the Pyramids,—those greatest monuments to human superstition and egotism,—centuries ago gave back their dust to fertilize the valley of the Nile. The countless kings who ruled the land, the millions of toilers and fighters who lived out their few days upon the banks of Egypt's great heart, have for weary ages been mingled with the soil and rocks and gases and water from which they first were made. The priests, who told their grotesque tales of what they called the truth of things, have gone with all their ignorance, and their bones and flesh have also long been dust. The conquerors, too, are gone; and the great builders, who lined the Nile with temples that they believed would last coeval with the world, and who builded monuments to keep their names and fames forever green in the memories of mankind, have so utterly passed from the living world that even their names are known only by the stumbling guesses of pedantic scientists. The temples builded by the weary toils of long generations of men have also died and crumbled, and many of them are utterly gone, while the poor few that remain are sinking again into the earth, returning once more to the substance from which they came, and proving anew that all things that have form are but manifestations

of matter,—manifestations that will hold temporary or artificial forms for a few years or a few centuries, but which must inevitably return to the elements from which all earthly things are made.

The great Nile valley is the grave of a hundred dead Egypts, old and forgotten Egypts, that existed, and possessed kings and priests and rules and creeds, and died, and were succeeded by newer Egypts that now too are dead, that in their time believed they reared permanently upon the ruins of the past.

As well as being a great cemetery of men, Egypt is a sad cemetery of religions, philosophies, and laws. Nearly all that has been in Egypt, of any kind or thing, is dead. Generation has succeeded generation, creed has succeeded creed, nation has succeeded nation, through all those long centuries, and all that has resulted are the crumbling ruins, the few poor towns, and the few miserable millions of ignorant men who cumber its soil to-day. Kings have gone with all their pride, philosophers have borne their few words of wisdom to their graves with them, and the priests who posed as the favored of God have crumbled as completely as did the dogmas they taught. And none of them left anything to make their successors wiser or better. The tale of the generations has grown to incredible numbers,—and we of to-day, “the heirs of all the ages,” have a science based upon a theory of

ions, philosophies that ignore the past and the future, and creeds that teach that the Creator of the Worlds is a terrible monster who will crush and torture the poor beings of his own creation!

Tyrant has followed tyrant in this weirdly beautiful land of Egypt, where the riches of nature and the fruits of human thought and toil have always been wrested by the powerful few from the weak many. Ever has egotistical dogmatism and ignorant superstition existed instead of proven knowledge and truth. Ever has much of the sweetness of existence been taken from men in exchange for promises of paradises to be found in other worlds, or men have been terrorized into servility, and tribute, and unnatural living, by tales of the horrors that would be inflicted upon them by the hands of those who builded the worlds and planned the races of men. And in this hoary old land, lying ancient and gray under its long centuries of human inhabitancy, the race of mankind, the highest form of life known on all the earth, is as yet risen but a little above the beasts. Women are bartered like cattle and goods; children are reared in ignorance, uncleanliness and evil, and live in squalor, vice, and want: and all of learning, knowledge, philosophy, and wisdom that the people have as their inheritance from all the centuries is a creed,—a thing that teaches, among other like things, that the earth is flat. In-

capable of ruling themselves, unable to exist under the heartless robberies of rulers of their own blood, their land is held by alien soldiers, and, in the sacred name of God and the more sacred name of Trade, is better ruled, and yet ruled with more profit to the rulers, than has been done for ages. But it remains a prostrate land and a groveling nation, and in Egypt, even more than in other lands, it remains true that

“The hardest and strongest are masters of time.”

The great valley through which the fresh waters of the Nile run down to the sea is a land of beauty, where the scent of growing crops forever sweetens the soft airs. Lowing herds browse in the fat meadows, children play by the waters, and across the fields of yellow mustard and fragrant clover and rich grains the wondrous reflections from the eternal sands are seen, as though promising and proving that all that is beautiful and good. The shimmering Nile bears in peace upon its broad bosom hundreds of boats that sail up and down the long distances doing the work of commerce. Villages dot the river bank, and nestle among the fields, as though in perfect peace. And ever, and always, the life-giving waters of the mighty river flow on, dispersing themselves through a thousand canals, raised to the fields by the labors of tens of thousands of men, eternally and forever renewing

the youth of the soil and bringing riches to the land. And there is always the sunshine, or the soft light from the great fields of stars, unobscured by any cloud; always the deserts with their silent tales of infinity; always the teeming, living races passing up and down the fertile land that feeds them. It would seem that this land of perpetual sunshine and eternal summer should be a happy land, where all should be wise and free, and where they should dwell in peace and plenty, and in happiness and security; where want should be unknown, oppression unheard of, ignorance rare, and injustice impossible. But such is not so. The mysterious sphinx that gazes away so inscrutably across the great valley has never yet looked upon Egypt at a time when men were free, and when equality of opportunity was even dreamed of for all. The tall pyramids, standing just between the arid and the fertile lands, were themselves builded veritably upon quivering hearts, were conceived in egotism and reared in injustice and wrong,—reared by serfs who toiled out their human heritage of youth and manhood to try to perpetuate the memory of some of their own kind,—weak men like themselves, who, for all their egotism and their care, are forgotten, and who are better forgotten. And, through all the long centuries since they were builded, the pyramids have looked out over a land of slaves.

Egypt has had many Gods, from those created by the Palæolithic savages to Ra and Amen, Ptah and Hathor, Osiris and Isis, Jesus and Mohammed. And yet, though an inconceivably long procession of hoary centuries has passed into the Great Silence, who in Egypt can answer those old questions that men ask of themselves and of each other and of the visible things in nature, of "Whence came we?" "Whither go we?" "What is right?" "What is wrong?" "What is the purpose of things?" Old Egypt, most ancient of lands, hoary patriarch among the nations, lies bound in the webs of its newest superstition, and it offers the dreams of an imaginative caravan trader as true answers to those eager and urgent queries. And in the name of this camel driver, and the God who is believed to have been his inspirer in war and rapine, what evils have not been committed! We know of the choice of the sword or belief offered by Mohammedans, of the burnings and horrors of the Christian Inquisition, of the ostracism, slander and hatred cast by many religions against unbelievers; and so, in the time of Ptah and Hathor it must have been the same.

In Egypt no one with power cares either for the present or the coming generations,—unless might be counted a few enthusiasts who hope to supplant the existing religion with another. What is wanted of

Egypt is dividends, place, and power; and the same God to whom army chaplains pray for success in cutting to death armies of men is supposed to be pleased,—for these things are sought in his name, and in the name of Civilization.

Yet Egypt, land of millions of forgotten dead as it is, land of continuing evil as it remains, does not teach a hopeless lesson. Rather, the lessons to be learned amid the mysteries of its weird, dead past are hopeful ones. The millions have gone; but that is not ground for sorrow, for they went in accordance with immutable laws; and, so far as men have been able to weigh and understand the immutable laws of nature, they have found them good. The millions have gone; but the law was that before they went they first had to come; and the law of the going of human life need, therefore, be no more sorrowful, nor less right, than the law of its coming. And it is good to know that all of these teeming millions consisted in the first instance and principle of individuals. And it is good to think that the God, or Gods, or Supreme Power, that moves all the earths and planets and suns in such perfect harmony, that causes the seasons to come and go with such supreme justice, has also caused, and allowed, little entities of individuals to come and go, to be born and to die (for if one is right so must the other also inevitably be right), and to live, and

move, and love, and strive, and accomplish, in accordance with the same laws that hold the great sun suspended so perfectly in the great systems of suns.

In the hundred dead Egypts men oppressed men; the inhumanity of man to man broke millions of human hearts; the accidents of birth into a world where unnatural inheritances were looked upon as being the law of God ruined the lives of myriads; vain warriors led multitudes to death, so that they, the leaders, might have glory and wealth; priests, and kings, in the name of the Gods who were believed to be their partners, ruled the lives of mankind. But these things, too, seem to have been in accord with the laws that nature has written under the name of evolution. And the law was twofold; the oppression, as applied by and to individuals, ceased; and the oppressors and the oppressed passed on out of Egypt, and out of life, in harmonious accord with the great law that has not changed with the dynasties and creeds,—that functions throughout time, no matter what king rules, or what man or woman men may choose to associate with God as co-rulers of all the countless worlds. And as the evils of the ancient and forgotten Egypts have ceased, so will the evils of the Egypt and of the world of our time cease. Already, in this better age of ours, priests and rulers, no matter how they are called, work for humanity instead of making humanity work for them. And

in some other time and place we may learn that in their deeper plans the evils we cavil against were not evils at all, that there are no evils, and that evil cannot exist in such a perfect place as is this universe where men are allowed to be. Even now,—there being no longer an Inquisition,—men have dared to analogically reason that if evil exists it must have been the design of the same God or Power that created good, and designed the universe. So Egypt is a land of hope,—for we dare to hope that the laws of nature or of God are as good as they are immutable. And as this ancient father of lands is studied more deeply, the grimness vanishes from its brow and the shadows fade from its face, and we find that its history is as encouraging as its Nile fields are green.

But, even if we learn a few hopeful things from Egypt, there are many other things about which we may not learn. And yet why grieve, or why blame Egypt? Egypt knows not the answers to the great, wistful questions of human beings, but in what newer or better land may the answers be found? Where may we receive proofs instead of assertions? But if we may not know the truth of the great questions, we may know the truth of some lesser ones, and this little of truth may be as priceless as would be that of the greater things. We know that our little spans of life are cast in a wondrously beautiful world, that the sun-

light falls in gladness upon the fair face of an earth whose beauty is beyond human words to tell or human understanding to appreciate, that the seas sing their endless songs in harmony, that the tides rise and fall, and the earth revolves, and the great systems of worlds run their mighty courses, all in accordance with laws that are perfect, and true, and inevitably and eternally just and right. And by knowing these few things,—and that greater truth that within each human individual is a something, not of his own creation, which impels him ever onward through evil to good,—we can conceive that, perhaps, what we call evil in Egypt, or in any other place, is in reality good in the long plans of nature, and as strictly in accordance with the plans and laws of all things as are the movements of the stars. And we can also conceive that whatever is the truth about the greater mysteries will prove to be as good and as just as all other truths, and that whatever will befall will surely be the thing that should befall. We shall find that whatever will be will inevitably be, and we may find that whatever will be will be right.

As I write the sun,—the great life-giver of the earth and the solar system, the worshipped god of a thousand nations, the Golden Horus of the Ancient Egyptians,—is sinking into mysterious Libya, the west-

ern sky is diffused and glorified with gold and saffron, and the shades of night are creeping over the silent bosom of the desert toward the Nile,—to bring relief to the myriad toilers who have wrought all the long day in the labors that must always be done to keep the desert back and to provide for the life that is here. In the deserts the Bedouins and Bishareen will halt their caravans and build their camps for the night; the felucca sails will be lowered from the tall masts of the multitudes of boats that sail upon the broad bosom of the great river, and the boatmen too will rest; and from the villages along the shore the smoke rising in the gathering gloom tells of firesides where are being prepared the evening meals that tired and hungry ones will have. The faces of the devout are now turned toward Mecca,—away from that golden mystery and beauty that the sun has placed in the west,—to recite their evening prayers. A cool wind blows out of Libya, caresses the river as it passes, and goes on to kiss the golden Arabian sands; a delicious freshness follows the heat of the day, as though to bless the time of passing from labor to refreshment, and the night has come, and the toils of the day are done. So sank the sun when wild men dwelt in the Nile-land; so it sank in the time of the great Rameses, who prayed to it, and worshipped it, and gave it advice, and called himself its son; so it sank, in the same mystery and

beauty, when the Ethiopians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and all the other conquerors, overran and took captive the land. When the first Christians came, then spreading the creed that the nature of man is evil, the same perfect golden glow lit up the wide west in magic and glory, and stood, then as now, as a living proof of the complete perfection of all the things that nature does. And when fanatic hordes came down upon the land from Irak, offering choice between a new creed and the sword, how many of them saw that across the desert in the west, beyond Libya,—over the side of the world,—a miracle took place each evening at the time that divides the day from the night,—a miracle greater than all the legerdemain chronicled in their holy book that they were shedding human blood to install? And it is a miracle that has not ceased, and that is as magical to-day as it was at its first occurrence. For the sun is going down. The great earth, swung by immutable law in space, has again revolved in its ceaseless turning toward the east, and its face once more turns outward from the sun. Why talk of gods who kill in anger, of gods who cast sweet babes to consuming fires, of gods hungry for sacrifices of blood or happiness, of gods commanding the slaughter of ignorant unbelievers, of gods who relegate their powers and authority to poor conceited men, when always and surely the sundown time proves anew that

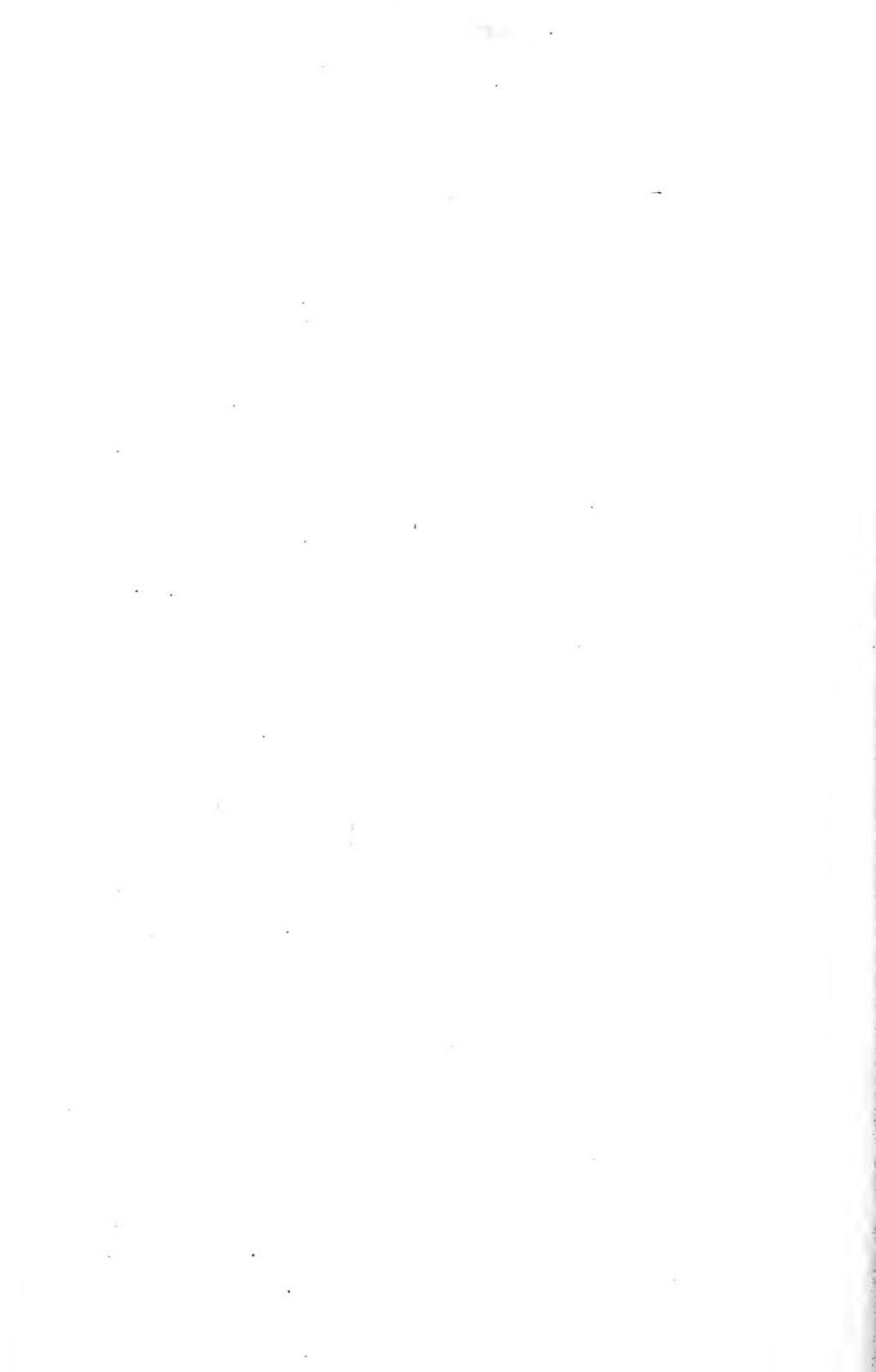
all the universe moves in accordance with changeless laws of infinite justice, perfect right, and sublime beauty, and which, in their full accomplishment, cannot be changed by a minute nor an iota nor a jot nor a tittle by all the marabouts and shamans and scientists and philosophers and prophets and mahdis who have dwelt in Egypt or in the world since the Nile valley first rose above the deep and the salt waters of its ancient fiord fell back into the sea!

But the sun has gone, tired Egypt sleeps in peace, and the sands of the desert, and the stars that gaze down upon them, fret not the night with thoughts of the creeds of men. And, following the last golden haze left by the sun, the moon has come,—another promise to humanity, hung in the sky!

We have gone from Egypt. But as the evening shadows lengthen along the shores of that same sea that flows by the old Nile-land, we like to gaze away toward Africa, and send our memories wandering back, past the towering Alps and the stately Apennines, across weary old Italy, down by the shining isles of Greece, to that mysterious, low-lying shore against which have beaten many of the greatest waves of human history. And there lies Egypt, bathed in eternal sunlight, blessed by eternal summer, resting between its enfolding deserts as a babe rests between the strong, safe arms of one to whom it is the best loved thing on earth.



THAT MYSTERIOUS, LOW-LYING SHORE AGAINST WHICH HAVE BEATEN
MANY OF THE GREATEST WAVES OF HUMAN HISTORY



VI

SOME SOCIALISTIC ESTATES

“What will you have?” asks God. “Pay for it and take it.”

VI

SOME SOCIALISTIC ESTATES

FOR one to say that he is a Socialist is not necessarily to say that he is opposed to all existing social conditions, that he advocates giving the goods of the earth to those who have neither earned nor merited them, or that he would hang the unfit and the incapable among men as burdens about the necks of the strong and the capable. It is true that there are many specious social doctrines being preached which advocate just those things, but as they are opposed to the very primal laws of nature they will never stand the test of experience, and not much is to be feared from them. If we should define a Socialist as one who strives to better the condition of humanity we should find that nearly all earnest, serious men,—whether captains of industry, teachers of creeds, or writers of essays,—are Socialists. Each one follows to a greater or less degree the course that he believes will aid the great mass of humanity in its toilsome march: and each one, if he stops to sound and prove his plan and his theories, finds many flaws in them.

The chiefest obstacle to the betterment of the condition of humanity is humanity itself; the unknown and unreckonable quantity in all projects for the advancement of mankind is human nature. We can define Socialism, or Altruism, or whatever name we choose to call our system: we may put a fraction of it into practice: and then we come face to face with the great truth that the evolution which itself is carrying humanity forward cannot be much hastened by the efforts of little human microbes. But we find a recompense for that sad fact in the other fact that neither can men much retard evolution.

I believe in a kind of Socialism that I think is based upon nature,—upon the same idea expressed by Emerson when he wrote: "What will you have?" asks God. "Pay for it and take it." Which is to say that I believe the great and boundless and inexhaustible wealth of the earth is primarily the property of all mankind, and that the only divisions of this wealth, the only segregations of any part of it to individual possession, except to children, and to youth making preparation for usefulness, should be in cases where the recipient had rendered services to his kind that entitled him to enjoy what came into his possession. I believe he is entitled to enjoy and properly administer all that he has merited, even if that be a kingdom; and I think he is not entitled to enjoy anything he has

not at some time merited,—not even a loaf of bread. And here I come into opposition with a class of men who have abused the word Socialism, who want something for nothing, or at best want rewards far beyond any services they have rendered to their race or generation. There is a question hidden under all this that is too deep for me,—the question of the equal rights of humans. As all human beings come into the world without their own consent it may be that each one has inherent rights in the world as great as those of any other,—that the slothful have the same rights to enjoy the wealth of the world as have the toilers. All this may be, but I do not believe it, although I believe they should have the same right to the chance of earning the rewards. And anyhow, as a necessary preliminary step to the more perfect social condition that the future holds, merit, effort and accomplishment will, as now, be rewarded above the rewards won or received by those who were merely born, who merely live, merely reproduce, and merely die.

In a more perfect social condition, which we might achieve in a thousand years if all worked to that end, no one will be allowed to inherit any title, or special privilege, or land, or wealth, or advantage of any kind; and the right will be recognized for every human being to win and enjoy just as much of the bountiful wealth of nature as he will deserve, so long as he

does not interfere with the rights of others. And each one, too, will be born with the right of being fitted to the fullest extent to develop his individuality, to win, and to enjoy, his share of the enjoyments and the goods of the earth. It seems to me that that is the Socialism of nature, and that it can be inferentially determined by appealing to nature. For even now, in spite of title deeds and barbarous laws of inheritance, those who will can claim and use much of the beauty of the world, and each one can actually have just that much that he can enjoy. And so the properties which I describe are socialistic estates, they belong to all who can enjoy them, and so, in a sense, they also belong to me. My titles of possession are founded neither upon purchase, grant, gift, confiscation, nor inheritance, but upon my ability to appreciate and enjoy them. And each one, no matter in what part of the wide world he finds himself, can enjoy the same kind of ownership in estates as beautiful as the ones of which I write, for nature has not been partial in the distribution of beauty. And so, in describing the estates that in one sense are mine, I think I indicate to others the memory, and I hope a renewed and increased enjoyment, of estates that in the same sense are theirs.

My estates of this kind are situated in many countries and they embrace nearly all classes of estates that

men have ever owned. The ones which I have last visited are usually those that are best loved, so just now my great woodland estate in Germany is much in my mind, for it is but a few days since I took my departure from it.

My German estate is called the Taunus Forest, and it is one of the most valuable properties to which I have yet acquired a sentimental title. It spreads in long miles of loveliness over hills whose beauty is more appreciated because they lie in a region that does not possess much else of beauty. And in addition to the dividends of enjoyment this forest pays to me and my fellow owners, it is the only near retreat I know from the unlovely self-content of a people who,—proclaiming that God is with them,—line their land with statues of warriors. I first came into possession of this property on a day when old Winter, in a playful mood, was contending for supremacy with the advancing Spring. I walked deep into the forest, which was silent save for the soughing of a gentle wind in the leafless treetops. But old Winter saw me, and as a welcome to the new owner he pelted me with snow, he dropped a few small hailstones upon me, and he sent some of his younger winds to skurry about me and make believe to frighten me. But he knew that I love winters as well as forests and knew that he and his winds were but playing. And he soon drew away

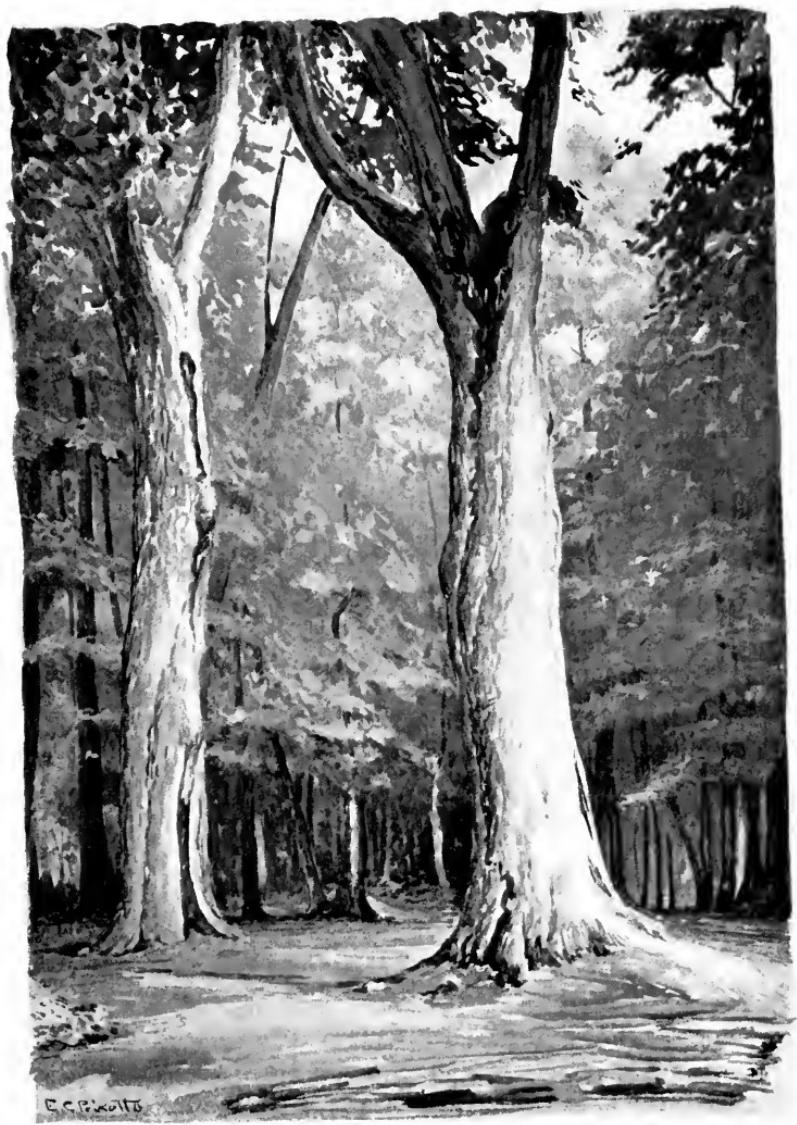
on his northward march and gave way for Spring, who came to take charge of my estate for me. I watched her day by day as she wrought her marvels. She touched the branches of the mighty trees,—some of which have stood in serenity while many generations of men fretted out their troubled lives,—and buds burst forth, and a few early blossoms ventured out, and birds began to come up from the South and make the fastnesses ring with song. And as day followed day so did the work of Spring proceed, and it was not long until all the great forest burst forth into full leaf, and flowers hung heavy and fragrant, and soft mosses and grasses spread themselves as carpets, and busy ants and bees went joyously about their labors, and older owners of the estate, with better titles than mine, began to send their calls across the leafy distances in sweeter tones than any diva has ever yet enunciated,—for the cuckoos had come back to their own. Those mahatmas of the woodland never allowed me to see them, but they cheered my walks and rides with their sweet calls that told me they were not envious or jealous that I had come to be a co-owner with them in their splendid estate. Some poet once wrote his doubt of the real existence of cuckoos, saying he believed them to be incorporeal voices floating in the air. But I believed my cuckoos

to have bodies and souls as well as voices, and I loved them all the better because I believed it.

Diaz of Barbison owned some forests much like this one of Taunus, and he made the world a little richer by trying to depict some of their beauties upon canvas. Of course he failed, as all painters have always failed: but his failure should have contained no sting, for he knew, and the forests knew, that all he could hope to do was to depict a little of the real beauty he saw, to haltingly imitate in a small degree the magnificence and splendor of his models. The Taunus suggests Diaz throughout. The sunlight falls through the trees and to the grassy carpets in visible, and it seems almost material, rays. The mystery that Diaz loved is there, and as one strives to gaze deep into the recesses his vision is stopped by the semi-aureate gloom, by the half-darkness that contains nothing to fear, that is found in the pictures of Diaz. The forest is consistent, and none of the fairy-like shadows, the supermundane lights and shades and the evanescent mists of Corot are there; but there are some suggestions of Ruysdaal and Hobbema, who, after all, were the elder brethren of Diaz.

There must always have been forests on the Taunus Hills, and long ago, when the Goths and Allemanni roamed this region, they encamped in them, and talked to the trees, and wove legends about them,

and took something of good from them before they went on to carve their bloody roadways across Europe. And those who came after them, even until now, while often being at war and dealing in savagery, have always had the saving grace in all their barbarism of loving the forests and conserving them. Old oaks stand in the Taunus that have seen many generations of humans pass from their cradles to their graves, that have seen petty ruler after petty ruler establish what each believed was ownership and sway over this land,—and then go on to those soon-forgotten graves from which no one wanted them recalled. Some of those old rulers, arrogating to themselves the rights of God, held men in subjection: and indeed it is not long since serfdom withdrew its devil face from Germany. But little by little the socialism of nature prevailed, and a few rights have been given to the people,—not all their rights, of course, for Germany, like the rest of the world, is still uncivilized, and its people, like other peoples, have not yet come into their own. They can still be called to wars not of their own making or liking, they can be taxed and ruled without their own consent, they must bow to the accidents of birth and the man-made laws of caste. But even so, in what country shall we look for better conditions? But throughout the centuries of wrong which have passed over its



THE SUNLIGHT FALLS THROUGH THE TREES

human tenants, the forest continued in its loveliness, its great old oaks and beeches and birches and elms and the mysteriously whispering pines kept on growing for all those who should be able to appreciate them: cuckoos, too wise to contend the unjust claims of the men who ruled because of the accidents of birth and not because they were chosen by the ruled, sang then as now and ignored them; the busy ants continued about their work of making soil to produce food for generations yet unborn: the butterflies reveled in the sunshine, troubling not about the evils of the world; the wild-flowers reared their heads in adoration, and the sunlight fell in glory upon the great tree-bolls, as they all had ever done and will ever do. And from among the myriad voices of the creatures of the forest, indeed as an undertone in every voice, there comes the statement that the condition of mankind does not much differ from the condition of nature's other creatures, and despite the unjust laws and evil creeds against which men must struggle, each man finds in life more joy than sorrow, more good than bad. And this is a good lesson to learn, whether we learn it from men or from trees.

I think the forest is a little annoyed by the many guardians its present rulers install over it. But when I first followed old Winter into its recesses the German law-enforcers troubled not, and I was free to walk

upon the grasses and mosses, and gather the first peeping wild-flowers if I would, and make free use of my estate. Later, like the French with Lorraine, while still calling the country mine, I had to surrender it into the iron hands of Germany. The forest lost none of its majesty and grandeur, the cathedral aisles of great trees were as imposing and as impressive as ever, the birds twittered and sang as before, and my friends the cuckoos continued to haunt the distances with their sweet, mysterious calls. But with the full coming of Spring and the advent of the helmeted representatives of the power of the law, came also droves of unsmiling humans, to take what they believed were holidays,—and it was time to go.

I left the Taunus once before the Spring had fully wrought its marvels, and followed old Winter farther on his northward retreat. I overtook him near that ugly creation of men marked down on maps as Vilna, and followed him to the Neva,—and he made a sullen, surly and unwilling retreat, and did not indulge in any of the playfulness he had exhibited at the Taunus. He frowned continually, and with black clouds and rumbling thunder and spiteful snow-squalls tried to frighten Spring back to the sunnier lands that love her better. And the country and the forests seemed to have more kinship and sympathy with Winter than with Spring. The very birches, which in other coun-

tries are graceful and beautiful, in Russia seem surly, misshapen and out of tune with nature. The pines do not nod and whisper in the confiding way of the pines of other lands, but frown upon the world as though they hate all the things it contains. And the suggestions of the human life of those dark forests are not pleasant. Gaunt, squalid, dull, seemingly almost insensate creatures, wrapped in great unclean skins and furs, came out of the fastnesses and stolidly gazed at us. We passed clearings where little wooden huts, like pig-stys, were the homes of half-alive members of that great troubled nation that in its efforts to free itself from the ills it knows is almost certain to rush headlong into abysses of even greater evil.

All the books for the instruction of youth preach the gospel of striving after greatness. And there are libraries of books which men have written to say that Napoleon was great, and to point out his greatnesses to us. There are memories and suggestions of Napoleon in these dark Russian forests, for to pay a grudge, to gratify a whim, and to feed his insatiable ambition, he led a great army of human beings,—each with as good a right to live and enjoy God's world as he himself had,—into those forbidding fastnesses to die. Old Winter did not content himself with frowning upon that unhappy horde, but he came down upon them, and loosed his storms upon them, and froze

them and killed them and lined the forests and the roads with their emaciated corpses. Napoleon's retreat from Moscow was along a terrible Road of Hell, lined with the dead and dying bodies of men who no more forever should see children and wives and sweethearts and the old parents at home. Dead, frozen hands protruding by hundreds and thousands from the drifting snows should have served as question marks to ask of Napoleon, and of the future, as to whether success in warfare really constitutes greatness.

In the present uncivilized state of the world war sometimes seems necessary, and it is sometimes true that for a great idea or for the protection of some great and inalienable right men must go in hordes to take the lives of their fellow humans. But if one will read the real truth, and face the real facts about wars, he will find that nine out of every ten is made to win loot of some kind or other,—to win land, or more chances for trade, or the power of ruling over more peoples. Some good came from the fact that Napoleon lived in the world, for he struck some old shackles from the limbs of mankind. But there is no city in the world to-day that contains as many human beings as the wars of Napoleon killed. His cannon and the cannon of those who contended with him devoured the flower of the youth of Europe, he made

humans into corpses faster than graves could be dug in which to bury them, and because of him thousands upon thousands of human souls were sent into the Great Mystery, prematurely severed from their bodies, whose brains died filled with black hatred, whose lips grew cold while uttering curses against their fellow atoms, whose hearts stopped beating while they were yet filled with the red lust for human blood.

So in my acquisition of sentimental possessions I declined to become in any degree an owner of the Russian forests. And when I returned to the Taunus and its happy birds I thought more and more of how much better and happier mankind will be when wars cease. And I rejoiced that there have not been many men as great as Napoleon in the cruel art of warfare.

From the Taunus we betook ourselves to another property over whose possession pigmy kings have fought great battles and spilled much human blood, yet which we acquired without money and without price, for we did not want to rule it. It was the Rhine at Bâsle. The Rhine is not a fortunate river, as it has to run much of its course past ugly towns built of stucco and imitation stones, and past hillsides and through plains spoiled with monstrous, smoke-belching factories. But at Bâsle, before it has entered the period of its degradation, it ripples, and sings, and shouts joyous messages to those who love

it. And it is at Bâsle that I and my fellow Socialists of Appreciation count it as among our best possessions, for at Bâsle it is a happy river. It knows it has forever left the picturesque highlands of its youth, that it is doomed to roll its way through the iron and ugly so-called civilization of modernity, whose units of success are coming to be coins,—but it knows, too, that neither modern industrial lunacy nor men can hold it, and that it is destined to go on until it freely mixes its waters with the free waters of the Seven Seas, where it can leap and toss and sing until the end of time. And the songs it sings at Bâsle were still in our ears as we set out for another of our great estates, which is hidden away in the quiet heart of Switzerland.

Our Swiss possessions contain forests, and glittering lakes, and green-clad mountains as well as other mountains that wear as crowns the pure white of eternal peace. The forest is wilder than the Taunus but it is no less beautiful. It, too, contains verdant cathedrals and long vaulted aisles,—where the dying art of architecture might be studied anew. And within its cool recesses there is a peace that is not known in the busy human hives where a few think they are rich and myriads know they are poor.

In such forests we find out how ignorant we are. I sat this morning and watched a butterfly, whose

name I do not know, do something that in my ignorance I did not before know was done by butterflies, which is to gather nectar. He was a beautiful creature, this co-owner with me in this great estate, and his wings were two fans, more exquisitely shaped than any ever wrought by an artist, and painted in colors that would outvie the lily. When the light fell upon his ceaselessly moving wings a miniature rainbow was depicted upon them and this phenomenon was repeated again and again as he worked,—as though to cry shame to the sorry crews who jumble paints together and call the results things equal to nature in beauty. Also to gather pollen and sip nectar other insects came, but, being ignorant of Darwin's theory of the natural warfare of species, they did not molest each other. They were wise beyond anxious Malthus and the avaricious ones among men, for they knew that rich and infinite nature is prodigally potential to support all of its creatures and supply all the natural needs and just desires of their bodies and their souls,—if only the creatures will escape from ignorance and cease from blinding themselves with folly. My butterfly might have gleaned nectar throughout the livelong, sunny day, and all the days to come after in his life, and stored it up in quantities beyond what hundreds of his kind could ever use, and fretted his soul as to how best he could pro-

tect it and leave it as an unearned inheritance to his children, and by it gain for them special privileges and advantages. But he was a wise butterfly and a sane Socialist (O, rarest of all Socialists!) and when he had enough he ceased from his labors. When I last saw him he was sitting at ease and in content, gazing into the wide valley that spreads in such splendid beauty before the region of his habitat, and putting into practice the least known and best lesson that philosophy has ever taught,—that of enjoying the Now of which we are sure, grieving not for the Then that is dead, and leaving the Will Be in the hands of God.

Monsieur Boule de Neige, an aristocrat of French birth and name but of pure English extraction, is another co-owner in our Swiss estate, although he had hated the Taunus forest and had refused to participate in its ownership. He disliked it because, being ruled by German laws, the individual has but little freedom there, and his English blood cried loudly for his rights of individuality. For in England, no matter how much the minds and souls of men continue to be shackled by iniquitous customs and obsolete superstitions, bodies are free. At the Taunus Monsieur Boule de Neige had to wear a muzzle, which galled his soul; and he had to walk in leash, which caused him to hate the day he was born. But in the new Swiss estate he came again into his rightful own,

and, free from muzzles and leashes and the iron-capped guardians of the German law, he runs, and rolls in the grass, and barks at the butterflies and bees, and tries to imagine himself a wild dog and a mighty hunter. He seems also to have a much greater respect for the family he thinks he has charge of, for in spite of our folly in racing up and down the earth in torture-producing conveyances, and of sometimes walking stiffly in unlovely paths where dogs are treated as prisoners, we at times are wise enough to fly from the folly of what is called civilization and return to the wilderness from which his and our respective races sprang.

In this Swiss estate I have taken a new and greater dislike to many of the men who inflicted upon the youth of the world the tedious, useless tomes that youth is told it should study. I wasted many precious months over the alleged histories of one Rollin, who knew no better than to chronicle in detail the miserable wars of half-savage conquerors, and who consumed pages of good type, and precious days of my time, over an eulogy of Hannibal, who had made no better use of the few and fleeting and uncertain years of his life than to fight and pillage by wholesale. If I had had wise teachers, instead of Rollin I should have studied Linnæus, and Audubon, and other real educators (as my children shall study Thoreau and

John Burroughs), and then I should have known more of the grasses and flowers, and of the rainbow butterfly, and of the bees and birds and ants that know so well how to make full and proper use of the great estate they inhabit.

I have an interest in yet another great estate, which is located at the dividing place of the waters of a continent, and is in Colorado and New Mexico. It consists of a splendid range of lofty mountains which rear their shining heads into the region of eternal snows, and which look down upon the valleys and their mad inhabitants with the silent tolerance born of centuries of wisdom. Tribes and nations of men, now long since dead and forgotten, passed up and down those valleys, warring with each other, building towns that soon crumbled and were no more, seeking to learn a little of the mysteries of the great nature that surrounded them,—failing a little, winning a little, hating a little, loving a little,—and then passing on in that mysterious progress that we all are making, and of whose end and purpose we are as ignorant as were they. But the serene mountains,—then as now emblems of peace and wisdom and the eternal justice that swings forever as the greatest of nature's laws,—gazed on in silence over the wide valleys or up into the infinity of the fields of stars, and interfered not with the humans

but left each one to make of his life just what he would.

The best place to view this splendid range of eternal hills is from a busy gold-mining region, where tireless, restless men are burrowing into the bosom of the earth, like gnomes, in search of treasure. How some of those men have suffered to find that gold, how some of them have hated each other in their quarrels over it, how some have envied others its possession, how some have swelled with pride and believed themselves better than their fellows because they owned a little of it,—how some have even killed others in their struggles for it. And what courses of good and evil the gold starts upon so soon as it is found and freed from its prison of rocks! Some men will warp their souls and blacken their hearts for some of it; some women will sell their honor for some of it; thieves will steal it, blackmailers and conspirators will scheme for it, and some men will give up the joys and freedom of youth and manhood and old age to gain it and hoard it! But, like all things else in life and nature, more good than evil will come from it. Some women will be freed from drudgery and petty lives, children will be educated who else might pass stunted childhood in grimy factories, men will be freed from hard necessity and will find the joys of leisure and study and travel, charity will be even a better

word, and mankind will be richer because the new gold is found, and a few, because of it, will enjoy that boon that is the natural heritage of every human born into the world, and which each one will have when humanity is really civilized,—freedom from poverty. There are some who say that to expect the suppression of poverty is to expect the kingdom of God upon earth. Are we then to suppose that God prefers the great majorities of humans to be poor?

But there is an indescribable peace hovering over the silent Sangre de Cristos, there are memories of the peace of the Taunuswald and of the Gurnigel forest, we seem to hear again the song of old Father Rhine as he passes Bâsle, and if we will get any good from the lessons our fellow shareholders in our great Socialistic estates have taught us, we will not fret as to the intentions of God or the ultimate end of things, but will remember, as do the cuckoos and the butterflies, that we are here and the time is now, and that if we will we can make of Here the best estate in the world and of Now the best epoch. And on the first page of our primers of Socialism we will write down that happiness is not a matter of geography, or of station, or of wealth, and that each one is, for the most part, the arbiter and ruler of his own happiness,—that each one can have just as many and as great estates of enjoyment as he will.

VII

SUNSET IN THE SAHARA

Many of the false things that strive to impress upon us that they are apples of gold need only to be tasted to be found to be filled with bitter dust. But the golden trees keep putting forth their magical harvests, and the real apples of gold exist.

VII

SUNSET IN THE SAHARA

I STOOD on a tower in a village of an oasis in the Sahara as the sun was sinking low into the western horizon. It had been hot in the oasis, and the cool breezes that sprang up with the first approach of the evening were very welcome. It had been the fête day of a Marabout,—a man who had been a murderous marauder in the name of religion, and whom the Arabs are impious enough to believe now sits in the highest heavens by the side of the greatest God,—and all the Arabs and desert dwellers had celebrated the day. And at the setting of the sun they returned from the praying and dancing that had been done before his tomb to follow their various pleasures in the village that spread below me. The sheik rode a prancing horse at the head of the returning procession, and behind him ran a lot of shouting men; then followed a band, playing the weird music always heard in Mahometan lands,—the mysterious music born of the mysteries of the deserts; then a troop of dancing girls who had performed at the fête; and behind them all extended the great distances, and reposed the great

silences, of the wide desert. From another direction across the great sandy stretches a tired caravan wended its slow way to the oasis and to the welcome rest and refreshment and comradeship to be found there. In the village streets fires were lighted before the abodes of the house-dwellers and before the low tents of the Bedouins as well, and the scent of cooking and the odor of coffee pervaded the air. Men sat in quiet groups, contemplatively smoking, as they awaited their evening meals; but not many groups were quiet, for it was a time of celebration and from the houses of the dancing girls and from the tents of the gamesters came harsh and discordant sounds,—the vocal expressions of the low joys of these low people. And so it was restful for one to turn his gaze from the unclean and unlovely village to the great desert that had no need for humanity or humanity's work to make it perfect,—to turn from the vileness of men to the perfection of nature. For whoever has lived in a desert oasis knows that its people are vile. The picturesque garments of the desert dwellers are unclean, the souls of the people are unclean, and they are low, and bestial, and brutish, and ignorant, and superstitious, and egotistical,—as all ignorant peoples or systems are. The houses below me were full of evil smells and spoke mutely of insanitation. In the squalid village children were being reared in ignorance and



AT THE SETTING OF THE SUN THEY RETURNED FROM THE PRAYING AND DANCING

vice; and women,—much like beasts themselves,—were leading lives but little better than those of the wild beasts of the forests. And how men have slandered the Creator, for it has been said that men,—and these creatures were men,—are in the image of God and but a little lower than the angels!

But as the rays of the receding sun grew more nearly horizontal, and the earth and the silent desert took on new shades of color and new appearances of beauty, so did the town and its motley population change color in the vision of our minds. We had been too close to the town before, too close to see it with a just perspective. Seen from a height it seemed stately and dignified,—the result of work, the fruit of thought. And also its people took juster places in our view. For above all the squalor and ignorance and poverty and vice of the place there arose humanity, and humanity is always instinct with latent good, with powers for progress. The distance and the waning light hid the unloveliness of the village and the imperfections of its people, and those people stood in our views then for what they were and are,—children of the world, creatures of God, fulfilling the functions they were born into flesh to perform.

In the west a great sea of crimson spread over the sky, and shafts of golden light fell upon the sand dunes that barred the view in that direction. To the

southwest a mirage had lain for hours before, but now it had vanished and in its stead lay a great sea of evening sunlight that took on added brilliance from the heated sands, and seemed to be a sea of molten gold. The shafts of light that sped through the atmosphere seemed to have been fashioned in the perfection of beauty by some Master hand,—as indeed they were,—and all that quiet, silent nature lay before us in the perfection of simplicity, the simplicity of perfection, and the perfection and simplicity of beauty. And through it we could know why poetry has always been the natural speech of the desert-dwellers, why the honey-bees of imagination always gathered rich harvests in the deserts, why the long, perfect lines of the desert rims have found their way, and their immortality in art, into the buildings of the desert nations.

Away in the farther distance to the west the steel-like rim of the utter desert also seemed somewhat softened by this mellow light that diffused all the face of nature. During all the full hours of the day that rigid desert rim had seemed to repel us, to warn us back, to caution us that it was the limit beyond which we might not go. But we had found, as we approached it, that it ever receded before us, that it surrendered to us as we won from it; and in its softer appearance it seemed to promise that it, like destiny and death,

would surrender its uttermost secrets to those whose hearts were brave enough to approach it without fear. And beyond it the undiscovered country seemed instinct with promises of rich realizations, of new knowledges, of higher wisdoms than the known desert had yet offered to us. And we did not seem out of place in that great circular world of oasis and sand that was bounded by this rim of the world,—nor did the village, nor its dwellers, nor even the camels and animals seem incongruous or out of place.

To the southeast, away in the distance, rose some gray hills of sand and stone that seemed strangely familiar,—and one of the remarkable things of the Great Sahara, which should, it seems, be the land of greatest strangeness to us,—is that it always presents scenes to us that remind us of other scenes in other lands. This is especially true to all who have traveled in our own Southwest and in Mexico and South America,—and it is true to those who have read any of the bibles that men know, or who know the poetry of the Persians and Arabs. So the strange desert, after all, is not an unknown land to any of us. And those gray hills, taking on more and more somber tints as the light fades, are even more familiar to us than are the other features of the great sea of sand, for they are strangely like the cliffs of Pu-Yé, that slumber, and smile, and scintillate, and speak their silent messages

in the heart of the Adobe-land of our own country,—
that

Adobeland, great silent land,
Weird world made up of sky and sand,
Where the mirage mocks, and sand-storms swirl,
And brown peaks brood at the drear, dead world—
Warm land of sun, bright land of sky,
Drear land of valleys drear and dry,
Dead land of mountains dead and bleak,
Where hazes shift, and shadows seek
To hide the wastes by man untrod,—
That silent land where men find God.

We have crossed the world to find again what we have left behind, to see in the heart of Africa a thing whose sister and counterpart exists in the heart of America. And so we find that it is the memories that men have left upon the earth that are as interesting as is the earth itself,—for in this Sahara something of the tale of mankind has been written, some of the passions of the human heart have found expression, and some of the best aspirations of human souls have been born. In these great fastnesses men have found themselves alone with themselves and with nature, and to know the meaning of the mysteries and the beauties that surrounded them they have sought for the truth about God, which, if it may be known, should contain all truths. But a little of such a great truth could be learned in the few hundreds of centuries during which mankind has inhabited the earth, and so but a little of it is known,—but the first glimmerings, but the first

few lines of the illimitable book; and what little is known is felt rather than proven,—but it is more natural for humans to feel than to prove, and perhaps feeling is as good proof as we need or shall have. But to look down upon this great shadow-covered world,—for the sun is almost gone,—is to know anew some old truths, to know them anew through the feelings. It is nature that speaks them,—the sun and its farewell rays, and the shadows of the restful night, and the great immensities of the desert. And these things say to us that our kind tortures itself with fears of its own invention; that this world through which we are making our journey is not a Valley of the Shadow of Death, but a Valley of the Promise of Continuing and Endless Life; that evils vanish and disappear, and only good endures; that hatreds die and only loves continue forever; that men do not sin, because they cannot, and that the worst they can do is to walk for a little time or a little part of eternity in error; that we have much for which to be glad, and nothing for which to sorrow. And we say, with that wise philosopher who learned his lessons from the wildernesses: "Why should we grieve, we who have not ceased to wonder?"

We feel the truths of nature, and so we count ourselves fortunate to be in this little corner of the great universe,—that withal, however, may be as important

to its Maker and Owner as is the greatest of the things He has builded. For in this lost corner of the little world the great Law of this Builder also endures,—that Law that contains in itself all laws, that is not harsh, and that is at once a guidance and a fulfillment,—its own justification and its own reward. Men may,—indeed must,—err in trying to translate this Law. Moses may have confused with it and intertwined with it the weird dreams that came to him in the silences of the wilderness; the vagaries of asceticism may have colored the translation that Buddha essayed to make; much of the message of Jesus must have been lost; the lustings of his flesh, the superstitions of his blood, and the chimeras born of his epilepsy, caused Mahomet to speak incoherently, and sometimes madly. But by all of these, and by all men who have striven in truth and have labored in earnestness in the world, some few halting words of the great Law have been spoken.

The sun has gone. The great desert lies under a film of darkness that seems to extend to the uttermost end of things. Below our tower are the twinkling lights of a little village, the cheery cries of a few of the countless millions of the world's people. The people sing, and fear not, for born in their hearts is the fearlessness and trust that all men carry and which all may find if they look within themselves.

And we come to think again that this great world, upon which the desert is but a speck, is a good world, and a beautiful and even a joyous world. Death is in it, but so is life—and perhaps those two strange words are but synonyms. Toil there is in the world, but it is a blessing even if it sometimes wears strange disguises; and it walks always hand in hand with rest and joy. Hatred is in the world, but it vanishes; and love is also in the world, and it has endured, and grown, and increased since the first man stood upright and marvelled at the sun.

The night has borne its wise counsels. The chimeras in our brains have been blown away by the evening breezes that are cooling the desert's broad face; we were mistaken in our first tired judgment of the desert and the oasis and its people, and now we feel that all of them are good and right and that they exist with as much reason and justice as do any of the things that men know either in reality or in divination.

VIII

DEAD CITIES OF THE DEAD

**“So fleet the works of men,
Back to the earth again;
Ancient and holy things
Fade like a dream.”**

VIII

DEAD CITIES OF THE DEAD

AS one gazes upon the virile, busy, teeming life of any city it is difficult for him to realize that in time the city as well as all the individual entities it contains will die. But it is true that that law of death which swings down from the uttermost sun that men have measured to the most infinitesimal ephemeride will also function upon all the cities that men have builded or will ever build. Indeed it is not only the cities that shall die, but all things that men can see are fated to undergo changes akin to that mysterious change that we call death. The great earth swings in its mighty course daily and always nearer to the sun, into which in time it must fall,—and there will be no more the earth. And when the sun has gathered to itself again the planets which are its children, it and its sister systems must also fall into some great astral sun and be no more as they now are. And on and on, through the great immensities of the universe, through the distances that have no endings and the spaces that are without boundaries, this seeming destruction will continue. So to look upon a dead city is but to look

upon a thing that has met the fate of all things but a little in advance of the existing ones.

We may grieve in our ignorance that cities have died, yet many things died with them that cause us not grief. In Pompeii tyrants must have oppressed the weaker ones of their fellows,—but those tyrants have long been gone from the scene of their tyrannies, and the period of their oppression was not long. In the narrow streets of this city that was builded for pleasure many things other than pleasure must have been known, much misery must have been felt and seen and endured, and behind the walls of the houses that to us are so full of interest the load of life must often to many have seemed heavier than they could bear. But they did not have need to suffer long, for without the hastening of grim old Vesuvius they would soon have gone on in the great march of that evolution which is beyond our powers to comprehend,—or sunk into the nothingness, and freedom from suffering, and freedom from any further pursuit by a possibly malevolent nature, which is the only other solution to the Riddle of the Beyond. What narrow lives must have been lived by the dwellers in those narrow houses,—for the things that almost two thousand years have given they had not. And yet how much broader and fuller some of their lives may have been than most of the lives that humans know how to live after the

lapsing of all those slow centuries! But the best of life was not much known in Pompeii, for Pompeii was a Roman city, and Rome was evil, and wrought in evil, even though it dignified its evil with the name of progress. To think that the little houses of this old city were but the resting places and recreation shelters of those cruel and arrogant warriors who fared forth through all of the world they knew in search, not of goodness and peace, but of loot and glory and selfish profit, takes away much of the pleasure of contemplating its recovered skeleton.

Far down toward unhappy Calabria, as one passes from Pompeii, are the few remains of the skeleton of another dead city which must have been more beautiful than the Pompeians could even comprehend. Its site, which was once salubrious, is now pestilential. Evil mists hover above it, fever-charged exhalations rise from its poisoned ground,—but there still rise in the majesty of beauty and death the great stone messages left to a careless and not-understanding posterity,—the great temples left by the old Greek builders upon the now fever-stricken swamps of dead Pæstum. Save the mighty builders miscalled Goths there have been no real architects since the Greeks. Those of Pæstum were but colonists, settled far from the fountain head of their inspiration, and yet outside of Greece there does not stand to-day in Europe such

marvels of perfection and of beauty, such sermons and poems in stone, as are those old temples that the miasmatic mists and the winds of the sea have not yet, through all the long tally of centuries, been able to wear back into the earth again. If an infidel stood at the temples of Pæstum he could not help reverently saying: "Whatever creed the builders of these structures had, I am convinced that that creed was good." Art is a word much misused, and much folly is uttered in its name; but at Pæstum one knows that it has a meaning, and that the thing it stands for is a useful and a beautiful thing. For, while most art consists of weak and puerile imitations of the perfection of nature, the splendid, mysterious temples of half-forgotten Pæstum vie with nature itself in harmony, beauty, and majesty,—and in the silent messages they bear that nature, and life, and form, and beauty, and God, are good. From Pæstum to Pompeii is as from Notre Dame to the Moulin Rouge, as from Paris to Brighton. We prate much of degeneracy in these flaunting, boastful, empty days of ours, but when we gaze upon the silent, mysterious beauties of these temples we come to know that we are all degenerate. We prate of our iron roads, of our machines that grind out things, and things, and things; but among us all, in all the lands that we so boastfully call civilized, there lives no man who could build the peer of

those crumbling edifices, and but few who could appreciate them if they were built. Shall we study poetry? It is written in the perfect lines of Pæstum's temples. Shall we seek pictorial beauty? What picture made with tawdry brush and paints knows the perfection of drawing, the perfection of perspective, the silent message which is art's mission, that are found in those perfect lines? Shall we say that music is the art that has no peers? Music is harmony, and on all the face of the earth no more harmonious things exist than those splendid works reared in almost forgotten ages by wholly forgotten men. Among the things that Pæstum teaches is that architecture will ever be, as it has ever been, the great mother of all the arts, and that all nations who forget this primal truth will have no real art at all. And as one stands beneath the shadow of these perfect things, art performs its mission of falling into step with nature,—and the world seems larger and better and more beautiful than it had seemed before. Space, which is suggested by the majesty of those daring lines, seems to take on even grander proportions. Space? We children talk of things of which we know not,—for space extends forever and forever, upward, outward, downward, without beginning or end, and always and always onward. And yet at Pæstum, in little structures builded on the face of a little earth by micro-

scopic men, all this is intimated. And, too, that Pervading Soul of the Universe, that Nature or Force or God from which we have no place of retreat, against which we have no power, from which we may not even think in secret, is also intimated. Paris the Magnificent is the most splendid city that men have yet reared under the gaze of the sun; but in all Paris there stands no thing, and has never stood any thing, so perfect and so beautiful as are those old temples that are slowly but majestically sinking back into the hungry soil of weary old Italy.

And then, down in the waste places hard by the Aures Mountains, stands another dead city,—another city that was reared by the hard injustice of cruel Rome. The Roman system contained much that was good, else it could not have risen so high or endured so long; but it came to contain more of evil, else it would have continued until now. Timgad was an outpost of Rome, and a City of Reward to those brave, heartless, heroic, cruel Legionaries who helped to carve its bloody paths. Rome was but a body without a real soul,—a machine,—a system based upon the mathematics of loss and gain, of definiteness of purpose, of persisting, untiring calculation and ambition, of the brute force of numbers and wealth. And these things are all exemplified in Timgad,—for every city is an emblem of the soul of the people who builded it.

The veteran Legionaries for whom Timgad was builded, and to whom it was given, were set there in that then fat land to control the Barbarians. Who had asked them to control those Barbarians? What right had they, what real superiority, that entitled them to rule those whose assent had not been given to their rule? Men do not yet know how long Timgad stood, but it is certain that the Barbarians outlasted it,—and no one remains in all the wide world to be sorry. The fierce tribes of the Chawia,—from whom its site had been stolen,—in time came down upon Timgad, as Barbarians later and in all places came down upon all the iron empire of Rome,—and Timgad ceased to be. To make sure that the hated and arrogant advocates of the right of might should come no more forever, they cut and burned the forests, they dammed the springs, they let in the desert. And for centuries Timgad was forgotten. The desert, which endures, sent its winds to aid the Barbarian natives of the soil, and the sands blew up and buried Timgad from the sight of men. And in that one place at least, for centuries, no men tacitly or openly uttered their egotistical dictum of "I am holier than thou art; submit thou to my domination." The sands of the desert will endure, and in time they will again baffle the watchfulness of men, and again will be hidden from the world the skeleton of this old city that stood as an emblem and an

exemplification of man's inhumanity to man, whose other name, at that time, was the Roman Empire.

And then, a long distance across the soundless deserts and the sounding seas, on by the cities of myriads of busy men, there lies, in a forgotten and almost unknown land, another smaller but more ancient dead city,—Sankay-week-carey it is now called by the few who have enough interest in it to give it a name at all. It is in America, but the most of Americans have been too busy in upbuilding a newer and better nation in the family of nations,—or, in some instances, in attempting to replant the ancient evils that our Founders sought to forever escape for our Nation,—to take even enough heed to know of the existence of this old crumbling town. Yet in America there are ruins perhaps as ancient, and certainly as numerous and as full of interest, as exist in any country in the world. But just now the price of shares and the doings of those whom the resources of our new soil have made rich,—too often merely rich,—are matters of too absorbing interest to permit us to waste time over Sankay-week-carey or its fellows,—for it is but one in a great region of dead towns. But in spite of stock markets and imitation aristocracies; in spite of the battles between honorable labor and its honorable natural ally, capital, which engrosses us so much; in spite of the passing of time and the invention of new creeds, the skeleton

of Sankay-week-carey persists,—a document from an age long gone, from a civilization that has now but a shredded remnant left upon the earth. And it persists and stands under skies more perfect than the skies of Italy, fanned by breezes as soft as the breezes of Ceylon, gazing over a scene of greater magnificence than is looked upon by any living city in the world,—and in a desert as beautiful as is the golden desert of Arabia. It was builded in three parts, and something of all remain. First there were troglodytic homes, carved in the shape of conical bee-hives out of the sheer faces of the towering cliffs,—for enemies could not climb to those places if they knew not the dizzy ways cut deviously in the rocks; then, when the little nation was stronger, there was a fortress-town builded upon the crest of the soaring cliff itself, and under its protection in time there grew up another great mass of buildings, forming a single building, at the cliff's base. That which is now in the best preservation is the part of the city that stood upon the cliff. It was builded in the shape of a six-pointed diamond, and builded of the most enduring stone. Its houses rose to four stories, they were all joined together, and their roofs were flat so that watchmen might walk upon them. There were two great stone gates, each roofed over like the houses. It was a city of peace, but it and its lands were surrounded by hordes of marauding

robbers, and its warlike defences were necessary for its preservation. Within its walls were storehouses for food and reservoirs for water, and just without its guarded gates there was its Sacred Field, its City of the Dead. Even its enemies, who would wreak any cruelty upon its living, would not molest its dead, and it was safe to place them upon the brow of that majestic cliff before which spreads as marvelous a panorama of beauty as the eyes of men have seen.

Sankay-week-carey, if one may judge from the estimates of geologists who compute the time it took for the talus of its cliffs to form, may have been builded coeval with the pyramids; and in that long march of time since then the very face of the landscape has changed. There was a time when rivers flowed down the valleys that now are dry and waterless, when groves cast their grateful shade where now is only vacancy and desert; and what now are but expanses of sterile nothingness once were rich fields. And yet it can be seen that even during its time of inhabitancy the region became partly desert, for old pathways can be found, worn by the pressing of myriad feet into solid rock, that lead away over the long miles to the greater river that flows in the wider valley in the distance, and which continues to support life and communities and towns. The storehouses built in the walled city must have held the crops reared in those

distant fields, and to those fields great companies of toilers must have wended their ways to till the soil. For this people was an agricultural people, although living in the midst of hunters and marauders. In times of peace what pleasant companionship must have been known in those groups of men and women who wended their way across the sunrise to toil at that most ancient and best of all toils! How many bright eyes looked love to brighter eyes as the homeward way was wended! How many wives and children, and fathers and mothers, stood upon the house-tops, far up on that sheer cliff, to watch for the return of the loved ones! If one may judge from the legends and customs of their descendants, those people had some strange laws. No one was allowed to own property that he did not use, no one could inherit property, and each one was entitled to a home, and a chance to win his support. To live thus removed from the blighting fear of want, to live in a community where equal chance was almost free to all, must have made life there good and sweet for all. And perhaps that iron, restless, tireless thing that we revere and call by the name of Progress could profit by remembering some of the simpler laws of those old and simpler peoples.

We may know these things and a few more of Sankay-week-carey and its numerous sister towns because all the people of the blood of the nation that

builded them are not yet gone from the earth. Like the Bigoudin in Brittany,—perhaps the oldest race in Europe, persisting almost unchanged in the midst of all the mighty changes,—some decadent, degenerate, hopeless remnants of that race of American builders still persist, in ever diminishing numbers and in ever increasing poverty, dwelling yet near the ancient habitat of their ancestors, treasuring sacredly the legends, creeds and laws of that older time, and hoping ever against reason and hope for the return of the Messiah of their race, who promised that after his people had endured centuries of evil he would return to restore them to their ancient dominion. The tale of time and of sorrows has been long, generation after generation has surrendered its bones back to the dust again, the conflict with nature for food and with crowding invaders for lands upon which to live has caused this people in weariness to forget many of the old tales they knew, and much of what they believed to be history. But enough remains to enable those with sufficient patience to piece out the identification of those old towns, and to prove that the few dwindling tribes of the Pueblo Indians are really descendants of the Cliff-Dwellers. They have lasted too long in the world if the world is right in the hastening progress it is making, for there is no room in our plan for quiet, unprogressive people such as they.

Among the numerous dead towns that surround Sankay-week-carey is Pu-Yé, which gazes upon the silence of the soundless land from a coign of vantage as magnificent as has been found by any town builders in the world. A world in monochrome spreads before the observer,—yet not so, for that seeming monochrome takes on, as the sun runs his course, all the splendid colors that those western deserts know. In the farther distance in the west are some great, shadowy blue mountains, shimmering through the light, dry mists that hang about their crests. Far off to the east some other mountains are seen, wearing the silver crowns of eternal snows. In all other directions the view is limited only by the power of vision, and miles and leagues of gray and mauve and golden sands stretch on and on, seeming to pass from knowledge into mystery, from faith into doubt, from the known on deep into the great unknown. How we recoil from space when we first consider it! And how we come to know that we must not fear it,—for if we are immortal we must be chosen,—or doomed,—to make our progress ever through space and time and lives and worlds!

Light and nebulous mists rise far down in the lower valleys, and from our great height seem to beckon to us and invite us to follow them. But if we follow they recede and we cannot overtake them. And then they seem to mock us, and to call out that they are but

phantoms, and that we who seek them are but other phantoms, and that the world, and the great fields of stars that at night look down in such unfeeling loveliness and coldness upon this desert land,—and humanity and its institutions and its hopes and fears,—are but other phantoms still. They call to us that mankind is useless and of no worth in nature's insane, phantas-magorical schemes. They ask of us to reflect upon those other men, those myriads and tribes and races, who once stood upright in the places where now we stand, and to remember that they are now but dust, and that all their hopes and fears, their plans and dreams, their loves and hates, are as though they had never been at all. With such thoughts the city-weight of life rushes anew upon tired brains, and again one sees the weary panorama of the struggle for existence, the hopeless quest for happiness, the warring and killing and greeds of our humanity that ought to inherit the earth in peace,—and the inevitable graves beyond the shortening vista of the years. But—a ray of sunlight falls through a pass in the silent mountains, the face of the desert valley is illumined and warmed and takes on new color, the eternal peace that rests like a benison and an answered prayer upon all that land finds its way to our hearts, and we know that the weary thoughts that are bred in cities of care have no proper places here. The peace of this wide and splendid na-

ture steals into our thoughts anew, quiets our fears, calms our troubled spirits, and then we see with better understanding a little of the great scheme of things,—and with new eyes we see the great panorama that lies outspread before us. In the eyes of imagination we see the processions of men and of long generations of men who have traversed these wide deserts and these weird valleys,—and gone on, hopefully and unafraid, to whatever destiny nature deemed it best for them to meet. And one comes to believe that when our own fleeting generation, too, is gone, nature will also lead it to whatever is best for it to know. And we come to know that we need not much trouble as to nature's intentions, and to feel that we could not understand if the entire plan could be explained to us in the simplest words, for we should be but as babes listening to a disquisition on geometry. Scientists have managed to spell out a single word in nature's great book,—not the first word nor the last one, but one from some misunderstood part of the middle. But from even that meager beginning men have been able to understand a little of what has been, and to dimly guess a little of what will be. And in the little that has been learned we find a harmony, a plan, a working toward a greater and better perfection than we can even understand. We, too, are parts of the plan,—perhaps as important as the suns, perhaps no more important than the ants,

whose busy cities line the view from old Pu-Yé. And, cheered with the belief that what great-souled Lafadio Hearn called the Great Thing, that pervades all things, is wise, and just, and benevolent, we say farewell to this magnificent and matchless panorama that enshrines these dead cities of tribes that may not be dead, and consider another dead city in another desert land.

Far down under the tropic sun of Oaxaca there endure the temples and tombs of some forgotten or lost race, that are strangely similar in many ways to some of the temples and tombs that line the course of the Nile. There is an old codex that shows in paintings the wanderings and sufferings and conquests of a red race, which, to judge from its first pictures, might have made the first step in its long journeyings from the old region of the forgotten cliff-cities. And hard by Mitla and its temples there exists a few caves of the same form and kind as those of the region of Sankay-week-carey. Have we come upon the meeting place of two nations and two alien civilizations? There is much to indicate that such is so. For the temples of Mitla are adorned with paintings that must have been painted by people of the same race as those who made their historical codex, and yet those temples, those splendid carvings, and those mighty Egyptian-like columns are not the work of that Northern

race. Did some Egyptian fleet, in that long lost time, get blown across the dread Atlantic to land upon the shores of America, and, going northward, meet and amalgamate with that cliff-dwelling, codex-painting race from the North? The Egyptians wandered often and far,—and Timbuctoo was a foundation of theirs. They circumnavigated Africa,—and what less strange than that an Egyptian people builded the Egyptian-esque structures of Central America? But the temples of Mitla, uncared for and almost unstudied, are sinking back again into the embrace of the common mother, and we may not know the secrets they have guarded for so long. Old Spanish priestly legends say that Mitla was the temple city and city of royal tombs of a race that was fighting for existence against the encroaching Aztecs when the *Conquistadores* entered that land,—but that legend does not help to decipher those fading pictures that are left upon Mitla's walls. But soft winds from two seas blow over Mitla, it is roofed with the sapphire sky of the Southland, life is unhurried there,—and why perplex ourselves with legends and codices?

From Mitla to Carthage is a far cry, both in distance and in time, and yet they had one great fact in common, and also in common with the cities of to-day,—they were inhabited by men and women who were much alike, despite the distances and the centuries,

with men and women who joyed and sorrowed, who cried and laughed, who loved and suffered, who won and lost, and who withal found much more good than evil in this spinning, hastening world, as do we all. When their accounts were cast they surely found, as shall we, that more friends had been true than false, that they had heard more kind than evil words, that life contained more good than evil fortune.

What joy must have filled the dauntless hearts of Dido and her little band when they came to the splendid site upon which they determined to build their city! And *Æneas* must have been indeed strong in his soul to tear himself away from such a beauty spot of the world. For in all the world, while others may be its peers, no fairer site for a city could be found. Washed on one side by the bluest sea outside the tropics that waves its greetings to the sky, on the other by a dimpling bay that seems the happy baby of the sea, with the mighty, mystic mountains,—and enduring Tunis,—in the distance, the marble halls of Carthage surely were set in a frame becoming their own grandeur. It is complained that Carthage was but a commercial city,—yet people of the same blood as the Carthaginians discovered new lands for the future development of humanity's progress, they planted industries where before had been but sloth, they carved out new roads where none had been before in which the nations are

still marching, and perhaps they proved that labor, no matter of what kind, is honorable, and that all labors wrought in good intent are equally honorable. And since then until now mankind has learned no better lesson than that "Labor is prayer." But Carthage now is but a covered heap of potsherds and stones and marbles. The full-breasted Bedouin girl at the tombs who offers her kisses for francs is of more importance in the world than Hannibal and Hamilcar. And the city, and the great race that builded it in its glory, are but dim and vanishing memories.

What mighty processions, the dead of these dead cities! What high-born hopes, what leaping ambitions, were buried with them! But we need not grieve, nor cavil against that universal death that took them all as its toll. For whether the law that causes change and death is just or unjust, it is immutable, and it will continue. And as it is as universal as the universe itself, as it is a function of the nature that whenever really understood has been found to function in right and justice, it, too, must be just. And that same nature has implanted something within us that, despite the wailings of perverted philosophers, despite our ignorance and our fears, teaches each one, and proves to him beyond science and scepticism and creed and philosophy, that Nature, or God, or the Great Thing, functions forever and in all places and ages in immutable,

perfect and absolute right. And so to look upon a dead city need give us no sadness,—for in them the misunderstood thing that we call wrong has ceased, and their peoples have gone on, on the road of the only enduring principle in the universe.



TO LOOK UPON A DEAD CITY NEED GIVE US NO SADNESS



THE SEA

"Then there is the sky and the water, a festoon of foam which whitens, a passing sail, a gull flapping its wings in the blue and luminous vapor; a clear immensity, the grandest of all immensities!"

THE SEA

THERE is nothing else existing in all the works of nature that appeals to men so much, and in so many ways, as does the sea; nothing that is so much loved, so bitterly hated, so feared, or so admired. The sea is emblematic of all we know of strength, of weakness, of gentleness, of fierceness, of hideousness, and of beauty. It is older than the rock-ribbed mountains, it was ancient before the first loam valleys were ground from the primeval granite, and it had passed through countless changes and had settled in its present form æons and cycles before men appeared upon the earth. The sea has always been known to men, since that dim time when Palæolithic tribes first caught fishes from its waves, and yet it is the unknown and seemingly unknowable part of the world to-day as it was when the first savage men gazed upon it in awe and wonder. Men have measured the incomprehensible distances of the high heavens, they have weighed the planets, they have counted the waves of light that flash from world to world in the infinite spaces, they have sent their knowledge down through

molecules to the uttermost atoms, they have mastered some of the secrets of the great mystery called life; but the sea has always baffled them, and the secrets that have been hidden under its rolling waves during the lapsing of all the long centuries are nearly all mysterious secrets yet. We have read only the first page of the great book of the sea, we have passed only to the borderland of the knowledge it contains, and the greater portion of its mysteries and secrets, its golden wonders and its marvellous beauties, are as yet only guessed at and surmised. We know it to be much greater in extent than all the lands upon the surface of the earth; we know that its waters teem with vegetable and animal life; we know that it, like all things else in the universe, is ruled by immutable and unchangeable laws, and that its tides rise and fall in accord with a changeless edict laid down in the first morning of existence; but we know these things only because we possess a little superficial knowledge of small areas of its surface; and what forms of beings, what grades of intelligence, and what mysteries of existence remain undiscovered in its depths we do not know and cannot even surmise. But in spite of all its mystery and the strong jealousy with which it guards its secrets, despite the terrors it inspires in the breasts of human beings, we know that it is the most beautiful thing on all the fair face of the great, beautiful earth,

—beautiful in a thousand ways, with beauties that are ever changing, ever new, and always sublime.

The sea has always possessed a strange fascination for mankind. Savages make long journeys in order to hold religious ceremonies on its shores, thus giving it recognition as the most sublime thing they know; and all peoples seek it for pleasure, for health, for gain, for food, for study or for knowledge. And to all who seek it, to all who ask of it, it gives. It gives; but, holding true to the great laws of polarity and equilibrium that pervade all things, it also takes; and often it is terrible in its taking.

Places, and phases of nature, have always possessed strong fascinations for men, the love of place being so strong indeed that to be unwillingly detained from a well known and well loved place has been found to generate a mental and physical disease,—a disease that has been fatal to thousands of transported slaves. Strong and highly developed indeed, or else at the other extreme of stunted and meagre development, is the man for whom some place, some broad desert or rolling plain, some quiet valley or pleasant hillside, does not possess a fascination, a not-understood appeal that calls him with a call almost as potent and strong as that of blood calling to blood, of kindred calling to kindred, of friend calling from the depths of his nature to the depths of the nature of

his friend. The great silent mountains call us, quietly, but insistently, but with such force that in time we must answer the call. The deserts also call those who are akin to them; and those who know and love the deserts are never happy if they are long deprived of the pleasure of seeing the broad, silent stretches of the beloved places that speak to them in a language untranslatable into human speech. But the strongest call of all is the call of the sea to its lovers. The sea calls, and the one who is called tires of the most finished cities, of the greenest fields, of the leafiest groves, of all the pleasures of the land; and nothing will cure the restlessness of his spirit, or bring happiness to him again, until he feels the breath of the great sea blowing into his nostrils, until he sees the billows tumbling in all their youth and strength and careless joy, until he hears again the many-tongued speech of the sea that speaks to all the understandings of his soul.

How the sea takes our vanity from us! Petty men, who are esteemed important or great in some little corner or city or nation of the earth, learn when they go upon the face of the mighty waters that a man is but as a breath of wind, as a drop of water, as a mist that vanishes in the night. They learn that the universe is infinite, that time is so long that we can comprehend neither its beginning nor its end, and



THE STRONGEST CALL OF ALL IS THE CALL OF THE SEA TO ITS LOVERS

that we have claim to greatness only in that we too are numbered among the works of nature,—that we are as great, and no greater, than is a fish, or a tree, or a bird. And that is one of the best lessons that we learn from the sea,—that we are so little, and so ignorant, and so weak and futile, that the very crown of our ignorance is to presume to possess egotism. The beginning of knowledge is to appreciate that we are ignorant, and so the sea is the greatest master of education in the world.

We know not quite why we love the sea so much, and so strangely; for with our love there is mingled fear, and often hatred. We may love it so much because it is in its greatness all that we in our weakness are not; because it is at once so old, so young, so fierce, so gentle, so joyous, so sorrowful, so beautiful and so hideous. For the sea is all these, and more.

The sea is the oldest thing in the world. When first the great earth-mass of vapors and mists began to solidify, the sea was born,—born of the darkness and the silence,—and it is older than anything men have seen except the suns and the stars. It is so old that cycles are but as centuries to it, and centuries but as minutes. It was inexpressibly ancient before it gave birth to the continents and islands that are its children. It was laden with age, and surfeited with the sorrows of eternities, before it wed with heat and

gave birth to the first life in cell or flesh that came into the world. And it will always be old. Lesser things may die, and change, or end, their forms of existence, and so they know that however great may be the sorrows that come to them, the end will also surely come. But the sea must exist on and on, through cycles and æons and long eternities before its end will be. It may be its fierce sorrow because this is so that causes it at times to rise in the brute might of its superdemonic strength and rend and destroy the more perishable things that have not to wait through eternities for death and change. Roll on, old sea! Often you seem to be under a curse, a curse that will not let you die. And as the long tally of the dying centuries passes into eternity over you, you must continue to roll and heave, and cry out in your great loneliness to the unheeding skies, for you must remain for ages a prisoner to unchangeableness, and rest is not for you.

But again the sea seems to be the youngest thing in the world. The thrill of quick young life pulses through its broad bosom as freshly to-day as it did in that long-ago first morning of its existence. It is as fresh, as unchanged, as eager, as virile, as strong, as joyous and as young as though to-day were the first day that had been since it separated itself from the mists and nebulæ and became a thing apart. "Young,

young, I am ever young," seems one of the glad songs the sea sings as its waves ripple and dimple and sport and gladden in the light of the sun. Men fade from the face of the earth, and become dust again; the sun and the stars shine for them no more forever; for them there is an end to the blowing of the soft airs of the skies, to the sight of bright flowers, to the loving embraces of dear ones; and as they fade, and turn to dust, and are forgotten, so also their nations fade, and pass away, and are forgotten. But the sea,—the ever-young sea that called them with its irresistible voice, that supplied the earth with rain and freshened the airs so that they might live out their little spans of life—lives on and on, in endless youth. The rock-ribbed mountains may grow so old that even the lightest winds of the heavens can rob them and blow the dust they steal from their sturdy sides into the valleys; so old that the rains and the waters can wear their stern granite ribs into sand that in time will become mold. But the sea,—the glad, youthful, joyous sea,—seems to be under the spell of a beneficent blessing that keeps it ever young. For it, if any years are misspent, the errors of them can be rectified during the great future of its perpetual youth. If there are any regrets for lost opportunities, it may rest content in the knowledge that the great cycles of time that will pass over it will bring the opportunities again. What dreams of

immortality the sea brings! Dim dreams of a time that might come when age, and weakness, and fatigue, and weariness, and disease and decay, would drop from mortals as an unused cloak, never again to be donned!

The sea is the fiercest thing in the world. The ferocity of volcanoes, of earthquakes, of the hurricanes that sweep the land, are as nothing in their results compared with the dread devastation that the sea has done. All the ferocity of all the races of men and of the other animals is so slight compared with that of the sea that it counts as nothing. The victims of all the great conquerors, who have swept men into graves as a miller sweeps grains into his bin, are but a tiny few in comparison with the millions who have given up their lives to the sea. It has despoiled multitudes of women of lovers and husbands, it has robbed countless numbers of men of sweethearts and wives, it has taken innumerable scores of children from the arms of parents. It has swallowed up great fleets of ships and dashed them as debris and useless waste upon its bottom. It has risen in its ferocity and greed against the land itself, and has engulfed smiling valleys and tall mountains. It has drawn great cities into its insatiable maw, and has laid waste populous countries. And after all these crimes it has gone its way, shrieking in maniac glee in answer to the cries of

those it has despoiled and whom it has robbed of all the world held that made life endurable. And yet it is loved; yet it stands as the work of nature that has broadest and deepest meaning to humanity, yet it remains as the greatest symbol of all that they hope for or long for that men possess. And above all, in spite of its ferocity, it continues to be more indescribably beautiful than any other of the wondrously beautiful things that kind nature has set before the eyes of mankind.

To describe the beauties of the sea is as impossible as to paint the lily; to understand or comprehend the mystery of its beauties as impossible as to understand the mysteries of birth and death. We can only say that it is beautiful, as beautiful as the light in the sweet eyes of a loved one, as the flowers that smile from the hillsides of tropic lands, as the dreams that come in the night to make us hope, and sometimes believe, that we shall know other lives in young other worlds even more beautiful than is this one. And its beauties change with every coast, and with every degree of distance, but they remain always surpassing description. During a storm its strength makes its beauty intense, and as the great waves roll in billows like unto mountains, as the white sprays dash madly from wave crest to wave crest, as the lightnings hiss downward from lowering clouds and seem to kiss

its surface in fierceness and passion, it is even as beautiful as when it rolls in sweetest peace. And when, in quieter moods, the sunlight falls upon its gently heaving bosom, and myriad sparks of light, like scintillating diamonds, flash upon its face, it takes on another, but an equally perfect, beauty.

Of all the wondrous works that men have done, the little of mastery that they have gained over the sea is greatest. That little atoms of men can devise tiny mites of boats that will ride safely and truly over the boundless wilds of the great waters is as great a thing as has yet been done. But the sea is master still, and it remains true that those who go down to the sea in ships do so in great peril; for the sea is not conquered even though at most times it is submissive. No greater seeming miracle is known than for a ship to sail across the sea, to remain above the waves, and to find its true way across the trackless distances and through the darkness and the nights to its port of destination. The conquering of the air is no greater.

To stand upon the deck of a ship and gaze into the banks of a black wall of impenetrable fog brings one very close to the great Mystery of Things. Sometimes the darkness seems like a great impassable wall against which the feeble lights of the ship beat fruitlessly and hopelessly. The darkness is so intense and so all-pervading that it brings thoughts of that ancient

time when the earth was nebulæ, when there was nothing but "darkness piled upon darkness and there was no light at all." And one can imagine that if he could at that time have had being he would then, as now, have felt the great mystery of the darkness, the great silent peace that the darkness contains,—and that the reasonable right of things would have been as apparent then as it is now.

The sea is like humanity, like destiny, like life and being. If viewed with distempered eyes, if looked upon with the gaze of fear, if shrunken from in terror, or hated in abhorrence, it seems truly a terrible thing, ravening like myriads of insane beasts, devouring all that it lusts for, and making a mockery of all that is lovely or sacred in the world. But if one brings to his contemplation of the sea some understanding of its great affinity with all else that is, he sees that it truly is like humanity, destiny and life, and that it is all the more wondrous and beautiful because that is so. Life and destiny, like the sea, are broad and deep, and they, like it, pass human understanding; but as we learn their mysteries we find them beautiful and good; and as we learn the mysteries of the great deep so do we also find them good and beautiful. Myriads of human beings have perished in war, but without war mankind would yet be enthralled to the strong and rapacious few. So the sea joins its voice to all other

things, and speaks out again that great old truth that whatever is is right in being.

The sea is most beautiful in the South. Where it washes the rocky base of ill-starred Martinique, where it smiles between Vesuvius and Capri, where it laps the rugged shores of Morocco, or seems to spring to kiss that white vision rising from its depths that men call Cadiz, it is even more beautiful than where it rolls and surges against the colder shores of Northern lands. It is beautiful where the Isles of Greece rise from it and seem to be great jewels studding a cloth of purple. And at Nice, where the Bay of Angels spreads like an azure carpet for a sea goddess to gambol upon, it is again, and differently, beautiful. It is at sunset that it puts on its greatest beauty here. Shades of purple fall over the northern Alps and across the distant Esterel, the receding light intensifies the whiteness of the everlasting snows that lie in such pure peace upon the higher mountain tops, and in the Western sky there comes a glow that no painter born of woman has ever been able to fasten upon canvas, and no son of man has ever been able to write of truthfully in books. If one stands on the shore of the sea at this place at sunset, and sees the great golden mass of the sun sinking behind the Esterel, the thought of some beautiful old superstition irresistibly comes, as that legend of the American Indians that tells that

the sun is fated to make his long journey across the sky each day, but that at evening, when his task is finished, a welcome awaits him in the palace of his bride who dwells in the sea, over the western edge of the world,—the bride, who, when especially desirous of making him welcome, diffuses the whole sky with a glorious saffron and golden glow to make him know that rest will be his after his toils and that love and joy await him at the end of his journey. It seems that such a sunset cannot be in a land where men oppress men, and rob each other of their chances of dwelling upon the earth in peace for the few days that lie between them and the time when their journey too is done. It seems, rather, like a glorious glimpse of a happy world, where is no death and no weakness, no poverty and no suffering, no envy and no crime,—

“Where no one shall work for money,
And no one shall work for fame,
And only the Master shall praise us,
And only the Master shall blame.”

It seems like a glimpse given by an angel or a god or a spirit of light into a world where all is good, and true, and beautiful, and right; a view of the world that we seem to reach in our best dreams; a world where all that the hearts of humans have pined for is theirs, freely, and given with great joy, and not

grudgingly. And as the sun sinks deeper into the West, and the shadows steal in heavier and deeper masses over the mountains and the sea, we come to think for a little time that perhaps all that we have seen in our imaginings is true; that this world that surrounds us and holds us, and in which we are confined, does actually contain nothing but that which is in reality good; that all is true, even if we do not understand; and that all that is is wholly and incontrovertibly right. For how could the sea remain upon the face of the earth, or the earth follow its orbit, or the solar system revolve as a part of the great astral system, if anything were wrong? If the earth should lose a pound of its weight, or if a single one of the millions of planets should revolve for one day in the wrong direction, what chaos might result! All seems to be right, even the ignorance which prevents us from realizing that this is true. All is beautiful, for beauty is but another word for truth, even if our eyes and our souls are not sufficiently developed and opened to enable us to see all the beauties that so abundantly and prodigally exist about us on all our journey from the cradle to the grave.

As we learn a few of these truths, of which the world is so full, how much more beautiful seems the sea,—and not only the sea, but the stars, and the ferns, and the butterflies, and all else that is within

sight of our eyes or hearing of our ears! And as we stand by the shores of the sea, and hear the tide tirelessly and restlessly pursuing its endless work of grinding the pebbles into sand, we listen to the murmur of the waves as they come singing in to kiss the shore, and they seem to take on a speech that we can understand, and to say:

“We are the waves of the sea, the unconquerable sea, the boundless sea, God’s sea, that has existed since the beginning of things, and will exist in some form or way forever and forever. We were born of love, we endure in strength, we teach wisdom. We know the soft kisses of the winds, the genial blessings of the sun, and the mysterious love of the moon that draws us and thrills us and helps us to be. We sing, for all life is beautiful; we murmur, for in our hearts is deep happiness; we laugh, for we are strong and young and free. We go where we list, we break upon shores separated by the width of the world from each other, and always and ever we live, we live! We are of the sea, and without us there would be no sea. We are of the sea, the mighty sea that was fashioned before the continents took form. We are parts of the sea, as human beings are parts of the great universe that is set in space of such dimensions that in it is no east nor west, no up nor down, no limit and no end. We, like the human beings, are small, but like them,

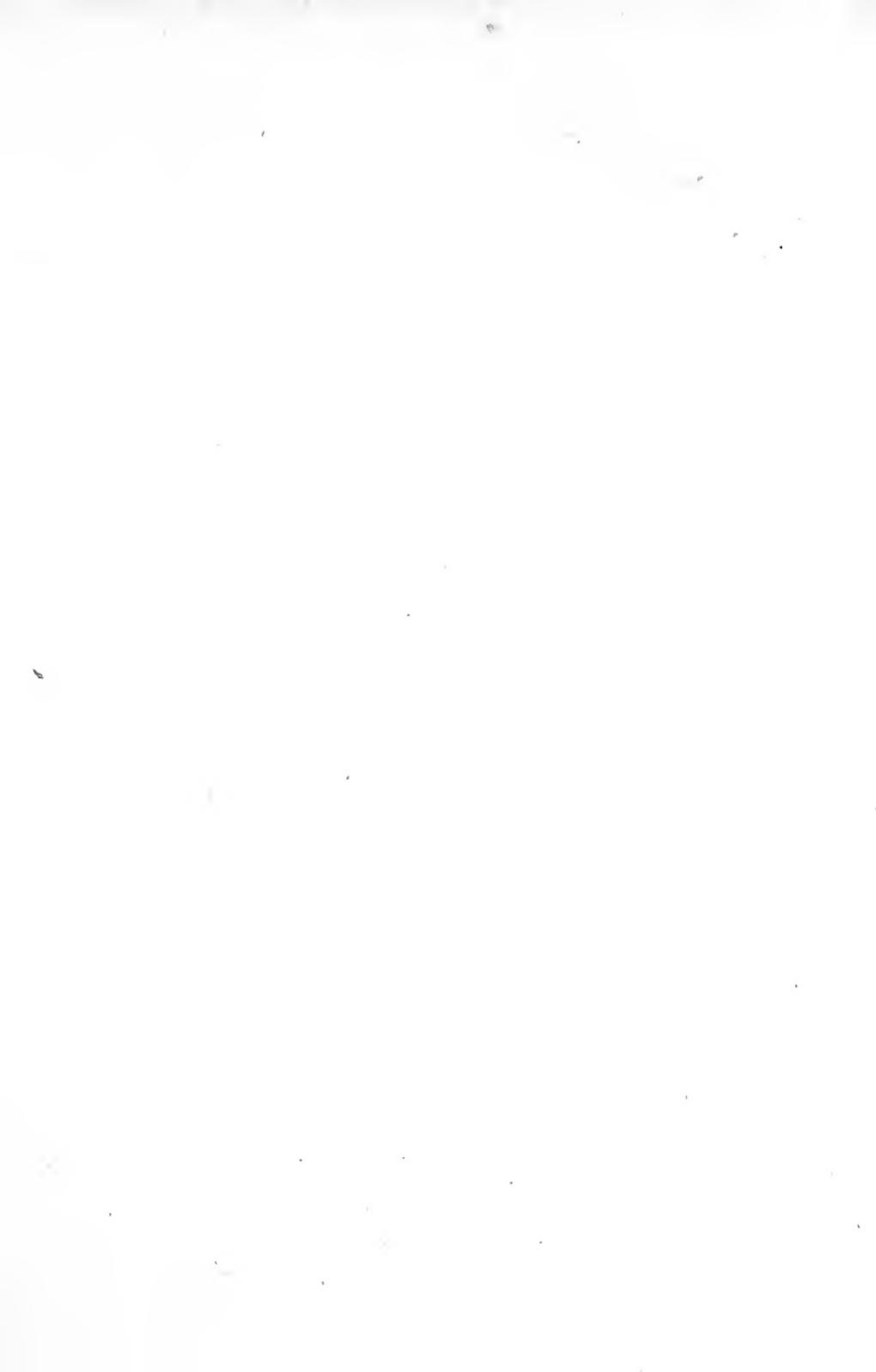
we are parts of all that is. So we, and the humans and flowers and all things else, are dear to the heart of the nature that fashioned us, and we sing in joy because of this."

And as the waves glisten in the glow of the fading light, and the shadows grow ever deeper over the face of the earth, the grand old sea itself takes voice and sings a song that is attuned to human ears; and it says:

"I am the sea; the oldest, the youngest, the weakest, the strongest, the most ravenous, the most merciful, the most hideous and the most beautiful thing that exists in all this great world that spins its mysterious way in magic round the sun. I am all of these things, I am all of these things, and in all of them I stand for right, as even the atoms, and the birds, and the stars are right. And all is well with them as all is well with me!"

And so forever surges the sea, so forever it sings its great songs that, if we learn to understand, tell us ever to hope, and to work, and to fear nothing outside ourselves.

THE END



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